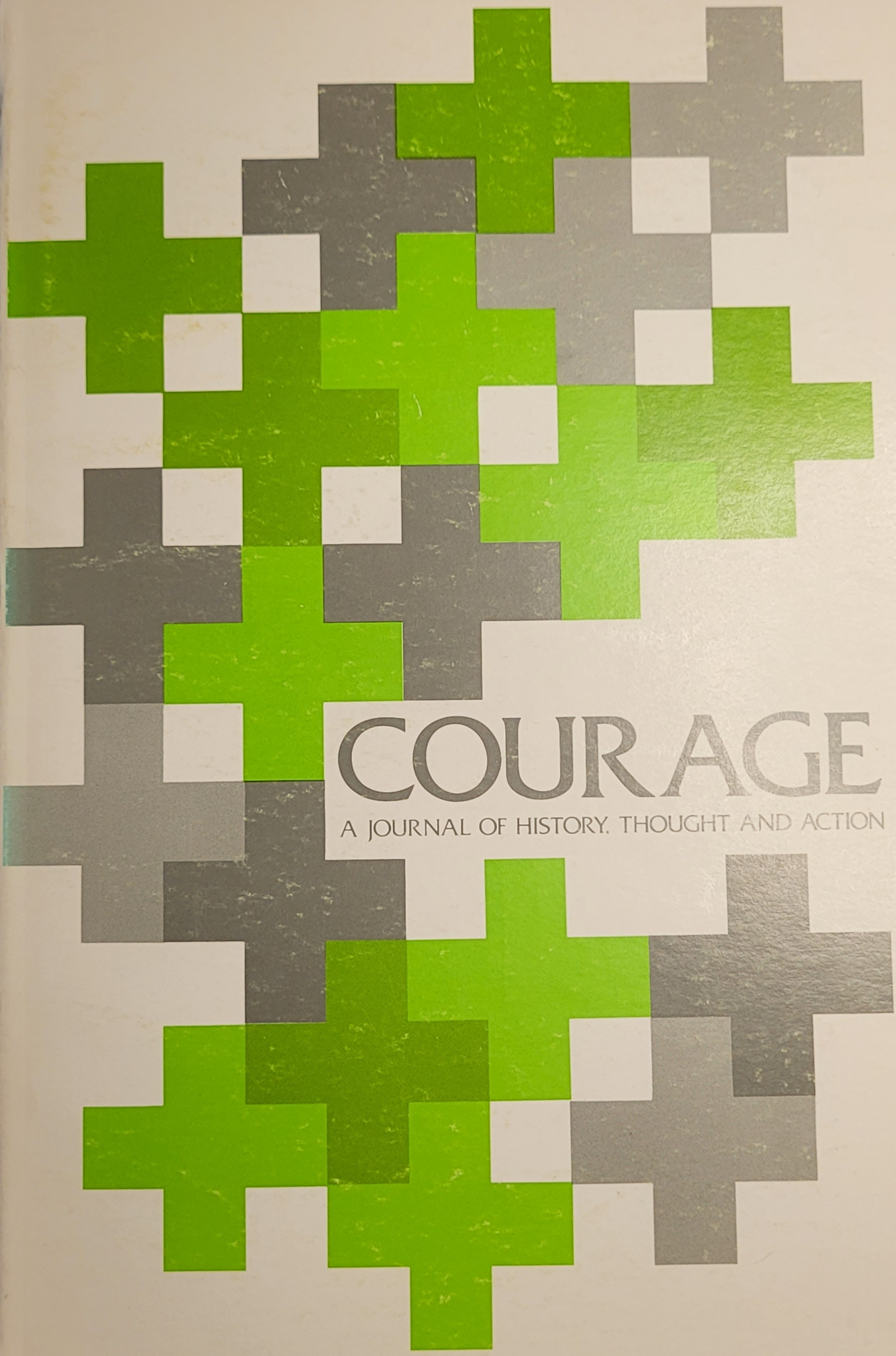

COURAGE

A JOURNAL OF HISTORY, THOUGHT AND ACTION

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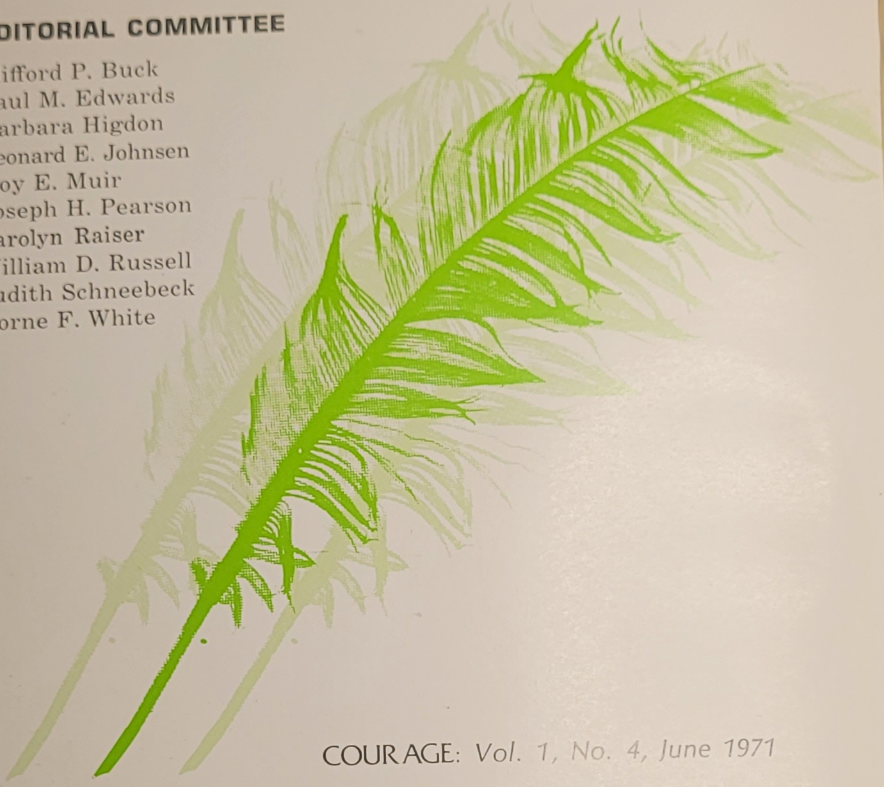

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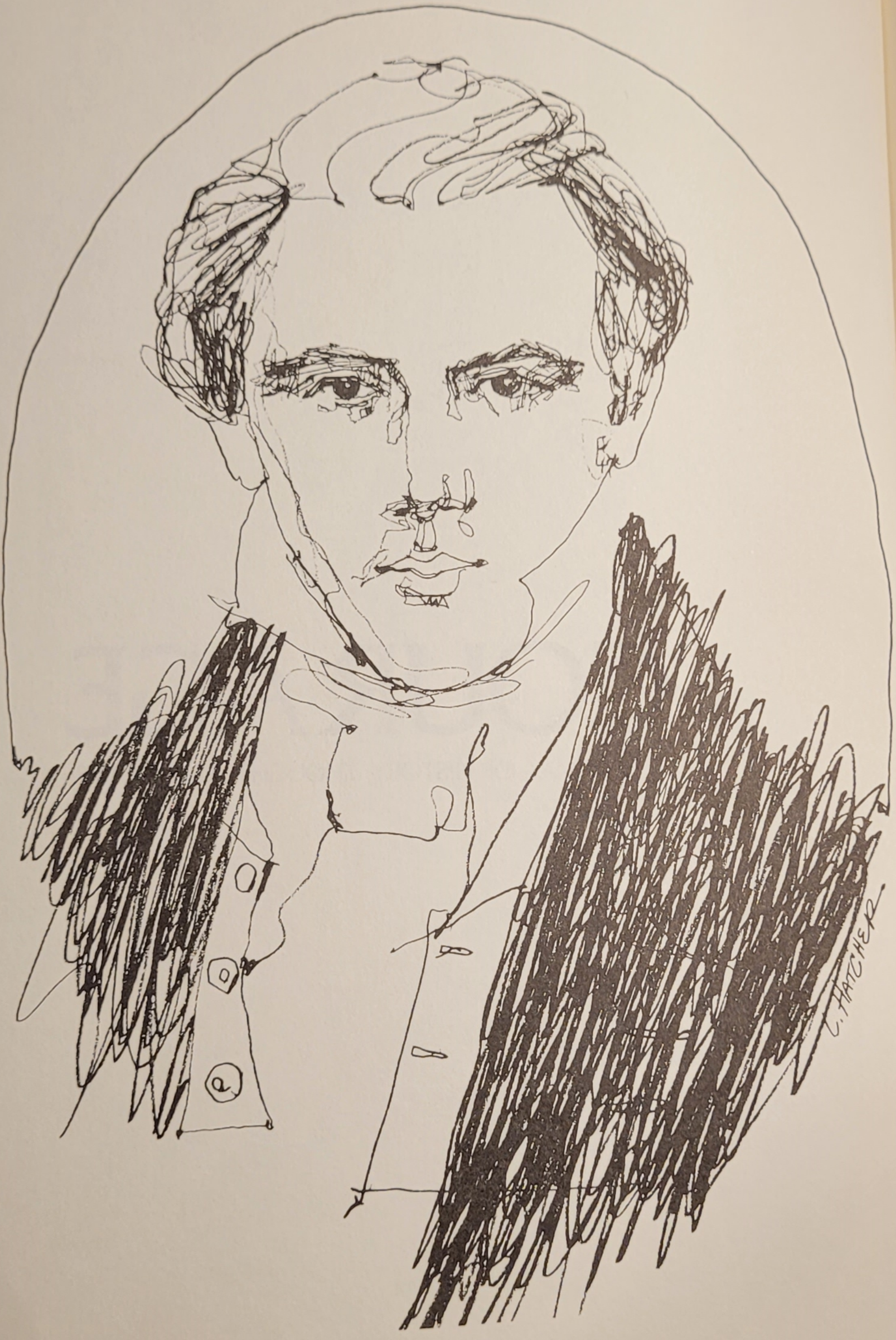
C. HATCHER

Latter Day Saint Scriptures and the Doctrine of Propositional Revelation

Richard P. Howard

The concept of revelation as the inerrant conveyance of divine truths and information and propositions has the built-in problem of producing documents that at points require reinterpretation with the passage of time.

The subject of Latter Day Saint scriptures and their relation to a doctrine of revelation is hard to explore comprehensively in such a brief paper as this. One reason is that for nearly a century and a half, most of the top administrators and leaders of the faith have tended to represent Latter Day Saint scriptures as synonymous with divine revelation. The masses of Latter Day Saints have followed their lead. But the twentieth century has spawned a professionalism in fields of history, theology, and philosophy. There has arisen a small cadre of historians, theologians, and philosophers who, through their disciplines and detachment, have ventured to travel beyond the boundaries of tradition to sift the evidence, to scrutinize the documents, to consider new interpretations, and to raise new issues.

For example, I have noted in recent years in the RLDS Church a definite trend in the published statements of *some* of its top leaders—a trend away from a doctrine of propositional revelation. By propositional revelation is meant thinking of revelation as the divine revealment of certain knowledge or information about God and the church, usually in the form of certain propositions or doctrines. This would be opposed to what William Temple once wrote of revelation as "the disclosure of the living God himself to man." The following quotation, then, is from a statement published in the *Saints' Herald* in July 1969 by the RLDS Church's Basic Beliefs Committee. It provides an example of how some top leaders of the RLDS Church are moving towards an *encounter* doctrine of revelation, and away from the *propositional* view:

> . . . for most Christians throughout the greater part of their history revelation has been understood as a message or series of messages. Those moments, or

> events, in which revelatory messages occurred were chronicled in the Bible. Whether or not the Bible needed to be interpreted or even supplemented by allied sources of truth was not in question; it was itself the word of God. Indeed, to many it was the very words of God. More recently in the course of history, however, especially in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, men have claimed the right to read the Bible as they would any other book and to apply to it the same standards of literary and historical criticism and interpretation they would to any other ancient document. . . . This critical scrutiny has not resulted in the erosion either of Christian faith or of a belief in the validity of divine revelation. Instead, it has resulted in a shifting of the locus of revelation from literature to history, and from propositional understandings about God to personal experience with him. The thing that has happened is [we have begun to understand] that Jesus Christ is himself the Word of God, and that nothing can take his place as the center of revelation—not even the Bible.[1]

That same committee published its statement on the subject of the scriptures the next month; the following is taken from that statement:

> . . . if scripture is to be accorded authority, it will be in some sense that is not incompatible with its human imperfection. Authority does not imply inerrancy either in the interpretations which produce the testimony or in the processes by which the record is transmitted. Neither the content of scripture nor our interpretation of it can be regarded as possessing the kind of infallibility that is universally and finally binding upon us. This properly belongs to God alone.[2]

In recent years I have read LDS scriptures in the light of such views as this, and have concluded that our scriptures, but particularly our historical understandings about their backgrounds, are often incompatible with this emerging view of revelation *as encounter*. This suggests that what is now needed in the Latter Day Saint churches, among both leaders and members, is a serious reevaluation of both the content and character of LDS revelation and scriptures. Hopefully, this paper will offer some stimulation and concrete help in forwarding that reevaluation.

Any reevaluation inevitably raises new issues and problems. But this particular reevaluation could be a real watershed for Latter Day Saints, of whatever institutional persuasion; for it might lead us to a major revision of our historic images of Joseph Smith, Jr., as prophet, seer, and revelator. Should that occur, then the approach to scripture and revelation of all of his successors in office, again of whatever institutional persuasion, would inevitably come under review in the light of that reappraisal of Joseph Smith. In the long run, the entire epistemological framework of Mormonism in all its forms could conceivably, over several generations, be redrawn. To use the phrasing of Paul Tillich, there could be a genuine shaking of the foundations.

This paper lays no claim to being hardly more than a tinkering with the superstructure. But we will proceed, first by assessing Joseph Smith's own self-image. Then attention will be given to the relationship between "translation" and propositional revelation. Finally, some brief observations will be made of Joseph Smith's changing of the revelations for a doctrine of propositional revelation.

Joseph Smith's Self-image

While dictating the *Book of Mormon* text in the spring of 1829, Joseph Smith arrived at that point now known as II Nephi 2:10-35 (LDS: Chapter 3). Portrayed there is the aged Lehi, conversing with his youngest son Joseph. After consecrating the land to Joseph and his heirs forever, and pronouncing God's blessings on him, Lehi affirms themselves to be descendants of the ancient Joseph of Egyptian fame. Lehi then informs his son that in due time a choice seer would be raised up, also of the lineage of Joseph of Egypt, one who would be like unto Moses, having power to bring forth God's word unto the people of Israel's lineage in the latter days. The certain identity of that choice seer was indicated by the words in II Nephi 2:29 (LDS: 3:15): "And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father."

As of the spring of 1829, then, in the minds of Joseph Smith and a few close friends, there began to emerge an image of Joseph Smith as a modern Moses, one commissioned by the Divine to do a task just as vital in the latter days as that ancient work of deliverance associated with the name of Moses. Moses had delivered God's people from sure oblivion, and from bondage to their Egyptian taskmasters. Now, a modern Moses, named after Joseph of Egypt and after his own father [Joseph Smith, Sr.], would reinstitute the gospel in its pristine purity and fullness, to the latter-day generation, thereby effecting its salvation.

This 1829 witness in II Nephi to the choice seer of the last days was given wider circulation by being featured in the lead article in *The Evening and the Morning Star* in November 1832. The entire text dealing with the lineage of Joseph from ancient to modern times was reproduced in that article, with citation to the *Book of Mormon*. The following February (1833) Joseph Smith, having resumed his revision of Genesis, came to Chapter 50, and transferred essentially all of II Nephi 2:10-35 (LDS: Chapter 3) into that chapter of Genesis. This had the effect of confirming in the minds of Joseph Smith and those of his followers who knew of this Genesis 50 development that which had already been published and accepted as divine revelation in the *Book of Mormon*. It is my view that certain other documents stemming from Joseph Smith and recorded during those early years of the church demonstrate this consistent self-conception of Joseph Smith.

For example, consider the following, recorded on the day the church was organized in New York in April 1830:

> Behold, there shall be a record kept among you, and in it thou shalt be called a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church through the will of God the Father, and the grace of your Lord Jesus Christ; being inspired of the Holy Ghost to lay the foundation thereof, and to build it up unto the most holy faith; . . .
>
> Wherefore, meaning the church, thou shalt give heed unto all his [Joseph Smith's] words, and commandments, which he shall give unto you, as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me; for his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith; for by doing these things, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you. . . .[3]

This instruction, given on a day of great rejoicing and new beginnings, probably reinforced the conception of Joseph Smith as the living oracle, the mouthpiece of God, for, to repeat a line from that section, . . . "for his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith. . . ."

Working with John Whitmer as scribe in the summer of 1830, Joseph Smith dictated the text of what has come to be known over the years as *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 22 (LDS: Moses 1, *Pearl of Great Price)*. Dated June 1830, this document contains what could be interpreted as an additional witness to Joseph Smith as a latter-day Moses:

> and in a day when the children of men shall esteem my words as naught and take many of them from the book which thou shalt write, behold, I will raise up another like unto thee; and they shall be had again among the children of men—among as many as shall believe.[4]

Incidentally, the choice of a term to describe Joseph Smith at the beginning of the above document went through its own evolution too, as shown in the original manuscripts of the New Translation of the Bible, which are housed in the RLDS Archives. In its first writing, June 1830, the title of the document was "A Revelation given to Joseph the Revelator, June 1830."[5] That title remained identical when recopied later that fall.[6] But on March 8, 1831, when John Whitmer was editing it for publication purposes, the title was changed, and Joseph Smith was given a more comprehensive, authoritative title. Please note: "A Revelation given to Joseph the Seer, June 1830."[7] This shift in terminology is not supremely important in itself, but, when seen in the context of other documents of similar thrust of the period, it has significance.

You will recall my earlier reference to Section 19 (LDS: 21). In that same document Oliver Cowdery was assigned to a status second only to Joseph Smith. In those pre-Rigdon days, Cowdery must have considered himself to be nearly if not actually Joseph's equal, for about three months later, July 1830, he wrote earnestly to Joseph Smith, commanding him to delete that part of Section 17:7d (LDS: 20:37) that states the basis upon which members would be accepted into the church by baptism:

> . . . and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins. . . .

This incident is known to all of us, and the important part of it was the reaction of Joseph Smith. He tells us in his history,

> I immediately wrote to him in reply, in which I asked him by what authority he took upon him to command me to alter or erase, to add or diminish to or from a revelation or commandment from Almighty God. In a few days afterwards I visited him and Mr. Whitmer's family, where I found the family, in general, of his opinion concerning the words above quoted; and it was not without both labor and perseverence that I could prevail with any of them to reason calmly on the subject. However, Christian Whitmer at length got convinced that it was reasonable, and according to Scripture, and, finally, with his assistance, I succeeded in bringing, not only the Whitmer family, but also Oliver Cowdery, to acknowledge they had been in error, and that the sentence in dispute was in accordance with the rest of the commandments. And thus was their error rooted

> out, which having its rise in presumption and rash judgment, was the more particularly calculated (when once fairly understood) to teach each and all of us the necessity of humility and meekness before the Lord, that he might teach us of his ways, that we might walk in his paths, and live by every word that proceedeth forth from his mouth.[8]

Joseph Smith's unyielding position in this instance indicates his conviction that that which he had set forth in Section 17 (LDS: 20) represented the very words of God, not to be tampered with either by way of deletion or expansion. He also conveys a concern with his own status as prophet, seer, and revelator to the church which is being challenged by that Cowdery-Whitmer combination so early in the life of the church. Clearly, his devotion to the propositional revelation doctrine, implying inerrantly communicated and recorded truths, is placing Joseph Smith early in his presidency in the defensive stance of asserting his own infallibility while exercising the prophetic role.

But the challenges to his authority had only just begun. In his 1843 history in *Times and Seasons*, Joseph Smith reports that by September 1830, only two months later, just as he arrived in Fayette, New York, he discovered to his grief that

> . . . Satan had been lying in wait to deceive, and seeking whom he might devour. Brother Hiram Page had got in his possession a certain stone, by which he had obtained to certain revelations, concerning the upbuilding of Zion, the order of the church, &c. &c., all of which were entirely at variance with the order of God's house, as laid down in the New Testament, as well as in our late revelations. . . . Finding . . . that many [especially the Whitmer family and Oliver Cowdery] were believing much in the thing set forth by this stone, we thought best to enquire of the Lord concerning so important a matter, and before conference convened, we received the following.[9]

Then appeared in Joseph Smith's history in *Times and Seasons* (Vol. IV, No. 8, March 1, 1843, pp. 118-119) the full text of Section 27 (LDS: 28), from which is taken the following quote:

> . . . verily, verily I say unto thee, no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church, excepting my servant Joseph Smith, Jr., for he receiveth them even as Moses; and thou [Oliver Cowdery] shalt be obedient unto the things which I shall give unto him, even as Aaron, to declare faithfully the commandments and the revelations, with power and authority unto the church. . . . And thou shalt not command him who is at thy head, and at the head of the church; for I have given him the keys of the mysteries and the revelations which are sealed, until I shall appoint unto them another in his stead. . . . Thou shalt take thy brother Hiram Page between him and thee alone, and tell him that those things which he hath written from that stone are not of me, and that satan deceiveth him: for behold these things have not been appointed unto him: neither shall anything be appointed unto any of this church contrary to the church covenants, for all things must be done in order and by common consent in the church, by the prayer of faith.[10]

So it was that by September 1830 the two previous affirmations that had been made separately, namely, that Joseph Smith was to be likened unto Moses (Section 22:24; LDS Moses 1:41) and that the church was to receive his words as though they were in fact the very words of God (Section 19; LDS: 21), are placed together in this instruction of Section 27 (LDS: 28) to Cowdery in this crisis over the revelations of Hiram Page.

One might expect that this clarifying instruction would have settled the matter of who could and could not receive divine revelation for the church. But, in the words of John Whitmer describing the situation at Kirtland as of February 1831,

> . . . there was a woman by the name of Hubble who professed to be a prophetess of the Lord and professed to have many revelations, and knew that the Book of Mormon was true, and that she should become a teacher in the Church of Christ. She appeared very sanctimonious and deceived some, who were not able to detect her in her hypocrisy: others however had a spirit of discernment and her folies [sic] and abominations were made manifest. The Lord gave revelation that the Saints might not be deceived, which reads as follows.[11]

Whitmer then copied the text of Section 43 in full, from which the following quote is taken:

> . . . ye have received a commandment for a law unto my church, through him whom I have appointed unto you, to receive commandments and revelations from my hand. And this ye shall know assuredly, that there is none other appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he be taken, if he abide in me. . . . None else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him, for if it be taken from him he shall not have power, except to appoint another in his stead; and this shall be a law unto you, that ye receive not the teachings of any that shall come before you as revelations, or commandments; and this I give unto you, that you may not be deceived, that you may know they are not of me.[12]

Contained here, it seems to me, is a double safeguard, based on the assumption that if there is only one person in the church who can deliver revelations to the church for God, then there is only one channel through which any other person could be appointed unto such a function. That channel would be the prophet of the church. Now, theoretically at least, the church would be protected from spurious claimants to revelation. All that would now be needed was the prophet's public denial of the authority of any such claimant; that would settle the matter.

In the RLDS Archives in Independence, Missouri, is a four-volume work by Thomas Hartwell Horne, called *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.* In the front of each volume is penciled the autograph of Joseph Smith, Jr., Kirtland, Ohio, 1834. This commentary is the Fourth Edition, 1825, out of Philadelphia. When Joseph Smith became owner of these volumes is unknown. To what extent he studied them is not indicated in any source I know of. Whether he had access to Horne's commentary prior to 1834 I do not know either. But what seems clear to me is that Horne and Joseph Smith are in fundamental agreement on the matter of the inerrancy of scriptural writers when writing scriptures, due to the office of the Holy Spirit. Note Horne's position, and its implications for a doctrine of propositional revelation as related to the Bible. As you give attention to this reference, recall that Joseph Smith's only argument with the inspiration of the Bible was not with the original prophets who received the truths of God but with the translators down through the ages who bore responsibility for the loss of much that in his view was vital to those original truths. Note the following from Horne's work:

> . . . Something further is requisite, besides a pious life and a mind purified from passion and prejudice, in order to qualify them to be teachers of a revelation from God, namely, a divine inspiration, or the imparting such a degree of divine assistance, influence, or guidance, as should enable the authors of the Scriptures to communicate religious knowledge to others, without error or mistake, whether the subject of such communications were things then immediately revealed to those who declared them, or things with which they were before acquainted. . . . It is reasonable that the sentiments and doctrines, developed in the Scriptures, should be suggested to the minds of the writers by the Supreme Scriptures, should be suggested to the minds of the writers by the Supreme Being himself. They relate principally to matters, concerning which the communicating of information to men is worthy of God; and the more important the information communicated, the more it is calculated to impress mankind, to preserve from moral error, to stimulate to holiness, to guide to happiness; the more reasonable is it to expect that God should make the communication free from every admixture of risk of error. Indeed, the notion of inspiration enters essentially into our ideas of a revelation from God; so that, to deny inspiration is tantamount to affirming that there is no revelation; and to doubt the possibility of inspiration, is to call in question the existence of God. And why would inspiration be denied? Is man out of the reach of Him who created him? Has he, who gave to man his intellect, no means of enlarging or illuminating that intellect?—And is it beyond his power to illuminate and inform, in an especial manner, the intellects of some chosen individuals,—or [is it] contrary to his wisdom to preserve them from error, when they communicate to others, either orally or by writing, the knowledge he imparted to them, not merely for their own benefit, but for that of the world at large, in all generations.[13]

The documents of Joseph Smith, previously cited, bring him into remarkable alignment with the views of Horne, in that the inerrancy Horne ascribes to the scriptural writers because of the work of the Holy Spirit applies also to Joseph Smith, viewing himself as he does as a modern Moses and a vehicle of modern scripture.

The first part of this paper has considered the self-image out of which Joseph Smith operated in developing his role as prophet, seer, and revelator to the young church. Now attention will be given to one facet of that prophetic role: translation, as a specific manifestation of a doctrine of propositional revelation.

Joseph Smith's Concept of Translation as Related to Propositional Revelation

The consistent affirmation of Joseph Smith and the church he led in those early years was that the *Book of Mormon* was translated by the "gift and power of God." It was not until 1835, however, that Joseph Smith chose to elucidate in writing the translation process in terms of naming the external, objective media facilitating the translation. Even then only by the phrase "by the means of the Urim and Thummim" which Joseph Smith interpolated in 1835 into the text of Section 3:1 (LDS: 10:1). [Note the original wording in Chaper IX of the *Book of Commandments.*] Here is a clue that he was moving toward a definite nomenclature in this connection. Prior to 1835 one searches in vain for a written account traceable to Joseph Smith specifying anything more precise about "translation" than "the gift and power of God."

There were ample pre-1835 writings by others, both within and outside the church, which hinted at the translation process, describing the artifacts used as spectacles, seer stones, or, to use the terminology of the *Book of Mormon*, Interpreters. The terms "Urim and Thummim" do not appear in the *Book of Mormon*. It may be that Joseph Smith's 1835 decision to call the translating media by the biblical terms, Urim and Thummim, was influenced by the use of those terms in W. W. Phelps' paper, *The Evening and the Morning Star:* The feature article of the January 1833 issue had said,

> It was translated by the gift and power of God, by an unlearned man, through the aid of a pair of Interpreters, or spectacles—(Known, perhaps, in ancient days as Teraphim, or Urim and Thummim.) [14]

This means that in January 1833, over three and a half years following the completion of the *Book of Mormon* manuscript, a knowledgeable church leader expressed uncertainty about what artifacts were used in the translation of the *Book of Mormon*. He even used first the term "Teraphim," generally agreed upon by biblical scholars to have been the household gods of Laban, ultimately recognized as having little spiritual value. The writer's second choice, Urim and Thummim, according to the best biblical research to date, were means of divination used by the high priest, in a yes-or-no manner, in search of solutions to significant problems facing the nation or its prominent citizens. There is no hint that Urim and Thummim were used in ancient Hebrew culture for language translation at all. But as of 1835 this fact had not been clearly established, so there was not that impediment to choosing to call the translating media by the biblical terms, Urim and Thummim. So this was done, rather uncertainly, as we have seen, in 1833, but by 1835 definitely, by Joseph Smith, in revising Section 3 (LDS: 10). In July 1838 Joseph Smith again used those terms in print in the *Elder's Journal;*[15] by 1842 a more detailed description in the "Wentworth Letter" as published in *Times and Seasons.*[16] By this time he was also referring to them as having been used in the reception of several of the early revelations, e.g., Sections 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15 (LDS: 3, 6, 7, 11, 14, 15, 16 and 17). Interestingly, none of the introductions to those documents, either in the 1833 *Book of Commandments* or in the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*, refers to Urim and Thummim as having been instrumental in their reception. Most of those *Book of Commandments* introductions were revised in the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*, but as of that date no mention was made of their reception by means of the Urim and Thummim in those introductions.

Of those eight *Doctrine and Covenants* documents listed in the *Times and Seasons* in Joseph Smith's history as having been received through Urim and Thummim, only one[17] hints at any "translation" process in the formulation of the document itself. This document is represented as having been translated from a parchment written by the beloved disciple John, apparently presented to Joseph Smith either in person or in some sort of visionary experience, translated by

Joseph and then hidden away by John. The manner of its disposal is similar to the later disposition of the *Book of Mormon* plates by the angel messenger. The historian is frustrated in his search for insight into this April 1829 translation. Neither Joseph Smith nor any other persons who might have had knowledge of this event have ever given us further clues about the basis of this translation. This matter will receive more comment in the final part of the paper, but for now it should only be observed that in Section 7 there seems to be a clear case of translation issuing in propositional revelation, i.e., information from a supernatural source, conveyed to the mind of Joseph Smith, translated, and written in manuscript form.

There are other clues as to the meaning of the word "translate" as it was used by Joseph Smith, Jr. Our traditional emphasis on the mechanical aspects of "translation" i.e., Urim and Thummim, golden plates, etc., often minimizes another dimension of the translation experiences of Joseph Smith. That dimension involves the relatively important part played in the experience by the mind and the emotions of the "translator," as these are enlightened by the Holy Spirit. This dimension is explicated in *Doctrine and Covenants* 6, 8, and 9 (LDS: also 6, 8, 9). Soon after Cowdery had begun to serve as Joseph Smith's scribe, in April 1829, he apparently wrote from Joseph Smith's dictation what we now call Section 6, which informed Oliver that he too could expect to function in the "translating" capacity. Note the conditions of such functioning, in the terminology of the document:

> . . . behold, I grant unto you [Oliver] a gift, if you desire of me, to translate even as my servant Joseph . . . and now I command you, that if you have good desires, a desire to lay up treasures for yourself in heaven, then shall you assist in bringing to light, with your gift, those parts of my Scriptures which have been hidden because of iniquity.[18]

Observe that the gift promised Cowdery was not described in this document. He was promised that should he demonstrate a certain single-mindedness to heavenly concerns and treasures, he would be able to engage in the same sort of translation activity which up to then had been the sole province of Joseph Smith.

Encouraged by this promise, Cowdery apparently pressured Joseph for knowledge about how he would be able to translate the ancient record, and for the privilege to do so. According to Joseph Smith's 1842 history,

> Whilst continuing the work of translation during the month of April, Oliver Cowdery became exceedingly anxious to have the power to translate bestowed upon him, and in relation to this desire, the following revelations were obtained.[19]

Joseph then immediately printed the text of Sections 8 and 9, with no further comment before, between, or after them to indicate what took place between the recording of the first one (Section 8) and the second one (Section 9). Note the content of Section 8 at the points where the gift of translation is the subject:

> Oliver Cowdery, verily, verily I say unto you, that assuredly as the Lord liveth, who is your God and your Redeemer, even so sure shall you receive a

> knowledge of whatsoever things you shall ask in faith, with an honest heart, believing that you shall receive a knowledge concerning the engravings of old records, which are ancient, which contain those parts of my scripture of which have been spoken, by the manifestation of my Spirit; yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you, and which shall dwell in your heart. Now, behold, this is the spirit of revelation. . . .[20]

Were we now to take the time to read the entire Section 8 as originally published as Chapter VII in the *Book of Commandments*, we would encounter a description of the objective media involved in the exercising of the gift of translation. It was the gift of "working with the rod," a "rod of nature," perhaps a forked witch hazel divining rod then in common use for locating underground water sources, with a history of occasional use by mystics for religious reasons. These references to the "rod" were deleted by Joseph Smith in preparation for the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*, and changed to the more generalized, symbolic "Gift of Aaron."[21] But in its initial form (*Book of Commandments*, Chapter VII), Section 8 helps us to realize that whatever stone artifacts Joseph Smith was then employing in the translation effort, the promise to Oliver of his being able to decipher the ancient engravings on the golden plates was related to his perhaps already demonstrated prowess in "working with the rod." The significance of this early reference to the "rod of nature" is not that it helps us to know the specific manner in which it might have been used to decipher *Book of Mormon* engravings, but that as of April 1829 Joseph Smith saw fit, under that which he claimed as divine inspiration, to suggest that the "rod of nature" could be used by Cowdery in the translation endeavor.

When we read Section 9 we get the distinct impression that Oliver tried to translate by using his "gift," but to no avail. The reasons behind the failure are that

> . . . it is because that you did not continue as you commenced, when you began to translate, that I have taken away this privilege from you. . . . Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought, save it was to ask me; but, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right, I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore you shall feel that it is right; but if it be not right, you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought, that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong; *therefore, you cannot write that which is sacred, save it be given you from me.* Now, if you had known this, you could have translated[22] [italics mine].

When one considers the explicit statements of Section 9, together with the implications of Sections 6 and 8, it becomes plausible to assert that the translation process was not a linguistic process involving transference of ideas and proper names and a narrative of events from one language into ideas of another, by a mind steeped in the symbols of both languages representative of those ideas, names, and events. Translation is rather, to the mind of Joseph Smith, an exercise in which by what is felt to be power of the Holy Spirit, his mind and heart is able to intuit language symbols and a flow of ideational content that results in such things as the stories of *Book of*

Mormon migrations, wars and civilizations, propositional information about John the beloved disciple, propositional truth about forms and functions of ministry and mission in the church of Jesus Christ, and divine laws and procedures by which the economic life of the community is to be governed, and on and on.

Using this same image of translation, Joseph Smith began a task of biblical revision that was to engage his mind and energies for untold hours from 1830 until his death in 1844. Of significance is the fact that his early work (summer 1830 through March 7, 1831) in Genesis was almost entirely devoted to "receiving revelations" for the benefit of the church, and this carried him through Genesis 19:35. Then, on March 8, he began working on the New Testament, with Sidney Rigdon, and at the top of the very first page of MS material was inscribed, "A Translation of the New Testament, translated by the Power of God."[23]

Here then, in the original MSS of his work on the New Testament revision, we find substantial evidence that in the mind of Joseph Smith "translation" connotes revelation, and revelation to him meant the transference of divine information and insights and truths through him as revelator and seer, to the people of the church. "Translation" did not involve fluency in languages other than Joseph Smith's own native tongue. For Joseph Smith translation was revelation. Translation was an activity whereby, according to the terms of Section 9 quoted above, after earnest study and meditation and prayer, the inner feelings of the prophet registered, cognition took place, and decisions were reached as to the rightness, the authenticity, indeed the divinity of the ideas which were to be written.

By this process, then, Joseph Smith could approach the King James text and subject it to the scrutiny of his prophetic mind and spirit. And, as he had done in 1829 with lengthy portions of the King James text when incorporating them into the *Book of Mormon*, he could—under the impress of what he affirmed to be the Holy Spirit—revise and supplement ("translate") that text. This, then, was translation. It was to be equated with revelation, which was seen as both the process and the ink-and-paper product of the metaphysical experience.

Implications of Joseph Smith's Changing the Revelations for A Doctrine of Propositional Revelation

The tendency of the propositional view of revelation is to give rise to the doctrine of infallibility concerning the prophet's statements made under inspiration. One of the reasons that the early Restoration church (1830-1844) never made canonization a legislative matter may be that the language in which the revelations were couched and the content of those documents as touching upon the status of their prophet combined to obviate this necessity in the minds of the people. Therefore, such foundational sections as 17 (LDS: 20) and 42 (LDS: also 42), to name just two specific ones, could be committed to paper by a scribe and become the laws of the church, with no felt need to ratify or to study their contents prior to general acceptance as the word of God. It was in this fashion, this style, that the *Book of Commandments* was commissioned and begun near the end of 1831. In this same style the *Book of Doctrine and Covenants* was ratified prior to its release from the press in August 1835.

In short, the early church moved in the spirit of propositional revelation. The *Book of Mormon*, the revelations, the New Translation of the Bible, all of these were viewed as inerrantly communicated and recorded through the living oracle, the one like unto Moses, Joseph Smith, Jr. When Joseph spoke to the elders such things as

> Hearken, O ye people of my church, saith the voice of him who dwells on high . . . (Section 1:1; LDS: 1:1).
>
> Behold, I am God; give heed unto my word . . . (Section 6:1b; LDS: 6:2).
>
> Listen to the words of Jesus Christ, your Lord and your Redeemer . . . (Section 13:1a; LDS: 15:1).
>
> Behold, I, Jesus Christ, your Lord and your God, and your Redeemer, by the power of my Spirit, have spoken it (Section 16:7e; LDS: 18:45),

his people could rest assured that what was being conveyed was indeed the very words of God or Christ. It would be for later generations of the faithful to ferret out clues as to relationships between what was recorded and the exciting, complex milieu in which those messages came into being.

The ferreting out has been progressing for some time now, and one thing I have noted is that the leading lights of the two main bodies of the Mormon tradition have, at different times, denied that the revelations ever went through any editing process, that Joseph Smith ever changed them. At best, these honest and well meaning men have simply ignored this aspect of the prophetic work of Joseph Smith, Jr. Why? Perhaps because they didn't know how to handle it or what to make of it. Otherwise, it may be that the implications of the fact of these changes were too abrasive and far-reaching, especially in the light of the continuance of the propositional prophetic tradition in both movements, in very different ways, and for equally different reasons.

Thus it may help to refer to some of these revisions of such important documents as Section 7 (LDS: also 7), Section 17 (LDS: 20), and 42 (LDS: also 42). I shall attempt this sympathetically, and with some realization of where this type of endeavor will ultimately lead us. Our immediate hope is that we will want further to consider the implications of these changes for a doctrine of propositional revelation.

Section 7

You will recall my earlier reference to Section 7 under the category of translation. Here is a good example of the difficulties to be encountered when one holds to the propositional view of revelation—i.e., divine truths communicated inerrantly through the living oracle. When first published in the *Book of Commandments* in

1833, this 1829 document concerned itself with only one matter: whether the beloved disciple, John, has tarried on earth—a possibility hinted at in the Gospel of John, Chapter 21:23. The answer initially was: yes, he tarries until Christ's second coming. Now, we come to the difficult problem: when and how did Joseph Smith obtain the further information about Peter and James that was not included in his 1829 "translation" as published in the *Book of Commandments*, Chapter VI? For, in the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*, this same document was considerably expanded to include new specifications of John's functions while he tarries, and the added information that Peter and James, as well as John, are to tarry and minister until the Parousia.[24] Such totally new information, published for the first time in the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants* as Section XXXIII, is glossed over entirely by Joseph Smith in his 1842 history. He reports the document in the stream of April 1829 events, but uses, in the 1842 *Times and Seasons* account, the 1835 wording. He makes no attempt to delineate the history behind the evolution of the document from its early content in the *Book of Commandments* to its more elaborate and spectacular wording in the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*. The historian must ask, "Why?" Why does Joseph Smith not explain his greatly expanding a document which had been "translated" from the parchment of John, presumably on the basis of propositional inspiration, and therefore free from major distortion or error? There must have been some compelling consideration keeping Joseph Smith from making forthright statements justifying his extensive editorial treatment, not only of Section 7 but also of many of the other documents in the *Book of Cammandments*. This question will receive attention later.

Section 17 (LDS: 20)

Our earlier reference to Cowdery's conflict with Joseph Smith over the deletion of part of Section 17:7d (LDS: 20:37) showed Smith to be adamant on the position that no one had a right to add to or diminish from any of the revelations of God to the church. In this matter Joseph Smith was perhaps affirming that the content of such an important document as the Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ had been verbally inspired and communicated and preserved for the church, for all time. Now this is all the more significant in light of his later (1835) expansion of that same document when preparing it for the first edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. Although he did not expand it at the exact point of Cowdery's objections, he did make a total of 102 revisions of that entire section. Many of these revisions were simply stylistic and grammatical, but many others were doctrinal and what might be called "institutional." That is, they reflect the growing institutional structure and functioning of the church as it had evolved in history from 1830 to 1835. These kinds of revisions of the text demonstrate the fallibility of the prophetic instrument at the time of his acting in the capacity as prophet, seer, and revelator to the church. That which he had caused to be recorded in 1830 and published in 1832 simply did not and could not foresee or comprehend the provisions that later would have to be interpolated to take into account institutional growth. And that institutional growth could take place only with the passage of time.

It thus appears that the concept of revelation as the inerrant conveyance of divine truths and information and propositions has the built-in problem of producing documents that at points require reinterpretation with the passage of time and with its inevitable concomitant, institutional growth. This is especially so, it seems to me, when the deliverer of revelation maintains the stance of infallibility, or when his people make such a demand upon him or when they live in such an expectation.

Section 42

Here is a significant document in the consideration of the implications of Joseph Smith's changes in the revelations for a doctrine of propositional revelation. Much of this document was first published by the church in the July 1832 issue of *The Evening and the Morning Star.* Its wording was identical to the text later appearing in the *Book of Commandments* (Chapter XXIV), but it was subjected to 138 changes by Joseph Smith in preparing for its inclusion in the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants.* Most of the changes were stylistic and grammatical in nature, but in paragraphs 8-11 (LDS: 30-39), a total of 42 changes were recorded. Most of these are substantive, reflecting doctrinal and methodological developments in the area of stewardship, and the shifting institutional alignments and relationships, both within the church and in the church's relationship to the larger community. For example, the earlier printing had instructed the people that,

> thou shalt consecrate all thy properties, that which thou hast unto me with a covenant and a deed which can not be broken.[25]

In 1835 this provision was changed to read,

> thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support, that which thou has to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which can not be broken.[26]

Clearly, the people in 1831 were required to consecrate all they had to the Lord's work. They no longer owned property, either real or personal. But the sad experiences of trying to implement such total Christian sharing perhaps constituted a revelation in itself to the mind of the prophet. Thus by 1835 he sought to rephrase the instruction more in keeping with possibilities of human realization. Thereafter the Saints were required to consecrate only their surplus properties to alleviate the distress of the indigent.

Verse 11c (LDS: 39), as another example, affirms that "...I [the Lord] will consecrate of the riches of those who embrace my gospel among the Gentiles, unto the poor of my people who are of the house of Israel."[27] This appears to be a guarantee that many Gentiles will espouse the cause of Zion, and that their riches (surplus) will also work to alleviate the hunger and privation of the poor and distressed of the church. But one must read the original wording of that statement to appreciate the context in which Joseph Smith in 1835 sought to rephrase it. As first published, it read as follows: ". . . for I will consecrate the riches of the Gentiles, unto my people which are of the house of Israel."[28] Now, imagine yourself as a "gentile" shopkeeper in Independence, Missouri, in that hot July, 1832. You read this on page 1 of the Latter Day Saint newspaper. Depending on your particular prejudices as regards those "strange Mormons," you might interpret that statement to mean that the Saints have been given to know that the Lord has his eye on your shop, with nothing but the good of his Saints at heart. And you might act accordingly, which many of them did a few months later. Of course the hostility was based more broadly than on just this single phrase from 42:11c (LDS: 42:39). But one of the grievances against the church cited by the Jackson County citizenry in 1833 was the Saints' boldly proclaimed presumption that the whole of Jackson County would ultimately be their divinely appointed inheritance. In that context, the original wording of Section 42:11c (LDS: 42:39) seems significant in shaping the attitude of the Jackson County citizenry toward the church, and, ultimately, in influencing Joseph to revise the text as he did in 1835.

This textual development of Section 42, documented against the history of the church between 1831 and 1835, serves to clarify the extremely hard position of Joseph Smith as prophet and seer to the church. Documents already committed to paper and to the hearts of the Saints made Joseph's followers strong adherents to the propositional view of revelation, and possessors of an image of Joseph Smith as a modern Moses.

But the events of history were inexorably leaving their mark on the church and on the mind of Joseph Smith. Together with the continued striving of the Spirit of God as perceived by Smith, those events placed a clear call upon him to reevaluate the meaning of what he had delivered in the name of the Lord, in the light of the impact of those intervening events. Thus it may be sound to submit that history itself drove Joseph Smith in 1835 to make massive changes and interpolations in many of the documents—first appearing in the *Book of Commandments*—now being prepared for release in the *Doctrine and Covenants.* And it may also be accurate to state that history itself drove Joseph Smith into silence on the matter of why he had so edited the revelations. Perhaps he sensed that who he was was in large measure defined by the expectations and demands he perceived in the responses of his followers, both to him personally and to his documents, which to his people were divine scripture. For Joseph Smith to have issued written explanations for his editing activities in the revelations in 1835 (and in the *Book of Mormon* text in 1837) might have fostered a credibility crisis among people who had been comforted by a propositional view of revelation and of the accompanying view of Joseph Smith as the living oracle.

In the further working out of things, one can appreciate that whatever yet remains misunderstood about Joseph Smith's self-image (and there must be much in this regard) he seems to have been, both to himself and to his followers, a modern-day Moses. His early experience as a translator reinforced this image among those sympathetic to his cause. The language and content of the published documents emanating from him, labeled by his followers as "revelations," form a unique expression of the doctrine of propositional revelation. But the editing process through which nearly all of these documents passed, especially when seen in the most accurate historical context that scholarship can re-create, arouses our sincere appreciation of the difficulties of our maintaining, in 1971, a doctrine of propositional revelation.

The church is confronted squarely with the question of the human element in revelation and scripture. To be grappled with are questions of interpretation of history and of empirically inscrutable metaphysical experiences. And, in appreciation of those complex but inviting issues the church continues its quest for an authentic assessment of the prophetic office in its experience. And not only in the experience of days gone by, but in the responsible life of the church in today's world, which our children and their children will ponder as the history of the 1970's.

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1. *Saints' Herald,* Vol. 116, No. 7, July 1969, pp. 31-32.
2. *Saints' Herald,* Vol. 116, No. 8, August 1969, p. 32.
3. *Doctrine and Covenants,* 19:1a, b; 2a, b (LDS: 21:1, 2, 4-6).
4. *Doctrine and Covenants,* 22:24b (LDS: Moses 1:41).
5. O. T. MS No. 1, p. 1.
6. O. T. MS No. 2, p. 1
7. O. T. MS No. 3, p. 1.
8. History of Joseph Smith, *Times and Seasons,* Vol. IV, No. 7. February 15, 1843, p. 108.
9. *Ibid.,* No. 8, March 1, 1843, p. 118.
10. *Doctrine and Covenants,* 27:2a, b, d. 4b, c (LDS: 28:2, 3, 6, 7, 11-13).
11. Whitmer, John. *The Book of John Whitmer, Kept by Commandment,* p. 18.
12. *Doctrine and Covenants* 43:1a, b, 2a, b (LDS: 43:2-6).
13. Horne, Thomas Hartwell. *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.* Fourth Corrected Edition. Philadelphia: E. Littell, 1825, Vol. I, pp. 229-230.
14. Vol. 1, No. 8, January 1833, p. 2.
15. Vol. 1, No. 3, July 1838, p. 43.
16. Vol. 3, No. 9, March 1, 1842, p. 707.
17. *Doctrine and Covenants,* 7 (LDS: also Section 7).
18. *Doctrine and Covenants,* 6:11d, 12b (LDS: 6:25-27).
19. *Times and Seasons,* Vol. 3, No. 18, July 15, 1842, p. 853.
20. *Doctrine and Covenants,* 8:1a, b, c, 2a (LDS: 8:1-3).
21. *Doctrine and Covenants,* XXXIV:3, 1835 Edition.
22. *Doctrine and Covenants,* 9:2c-4a (LDS: 9:5-10).
23. The stimulus for this New Testament work came on March 7, 1831, and is reflected in these words of Section 45:11a, b (LDS: 45:60-61):

    ". . . It shall not be given unto you to know any further concerning this chapter, until the New Testament be translated, and in it all these things shall be made known; wherefore I give unto you that you may now translate it, that ye may be prepared for the things to come. . . ."

[24] The following parallel column arrangement shows the development of Section 7:

CHAPTER VI, BOOK OF COMMANDMENTS	SECTION 7, DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS*
And the Lord said unto me, John my beloved, what desirest thou? [1] ∧ and I said [2] ∧ Lord, give unto me power [3] ∧ that I may [4] ∧ bring souls unto thee.- And the Lord said unto me: Verily, verily I say unto thee, because thou desiredst this, thou shalt tarry till I come in my glory: [5] ∧	And the Lord said unto me, John, my beloved, what desirest thou? [1] For if ye shall ask, what you will, it shall be granted unto you. And I said [2] unto him, Lord, give unto me power [3] over death, that I may [4] live and bring souls unto thee. And the Lord said unto me, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, because thou desiredst this thou shalt tarry until I come in my glory, [5] and shall prophesy before nations, kindreds, tongues and people.
And for this cause, the Lord said unto Peter:- If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? for he desiredst of me that he might bring souls unto me: but thou desiredst that thou might speedily come unto me in my kingdom: I say unto thee, Peter, this was a good desire, but my beloved has [6] ∧ undertaken a greater work. [7] ∧	And for this cause the Lord said unto Peter, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? For he desiredst of me that he might bring souls unto me; but thou desiredst that thou might speedily come unto me in my kingdom. I say unto thee, Peter, this was a good desire, but my beloved has [6] desired that he might do more, or a greater work, yet among men than what he has before done; yea, he has undertaken a greater work; [7] therefore, I will make him as flaming fire and a ministering angel: he shall minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation who dwell on the earth: and I will make thee to minister for him and for thy brother James: and unto you three I will give this power and the keys of this ministry until I come.
Verily I say unto you, ye shall both have according to your desires, for ye both joy in that which ye have desired.	Verily I say unto you, ye shall both have according to your desires, for ye both joy in that which ye have desired.

*Section XXXIII in the 1835 Edition

25. *The Evening and the Morning Star*, Vol. 1, No. 2, July, 1832, p. 1; also, *Book of Commandments*, Chapter XLIV:26, p. 92.
26. *Doctrine and Covenants*, 1835 Ed., XIII:8, p. 122.
27. *Ibid.*, verse 11, p. 123.
28. *The Evening and the Morning Star*, Vol. I, No. 2, July, 1832, p. 1; also, *Book of Commandments*, Chapter XLIV:32, p. 93.

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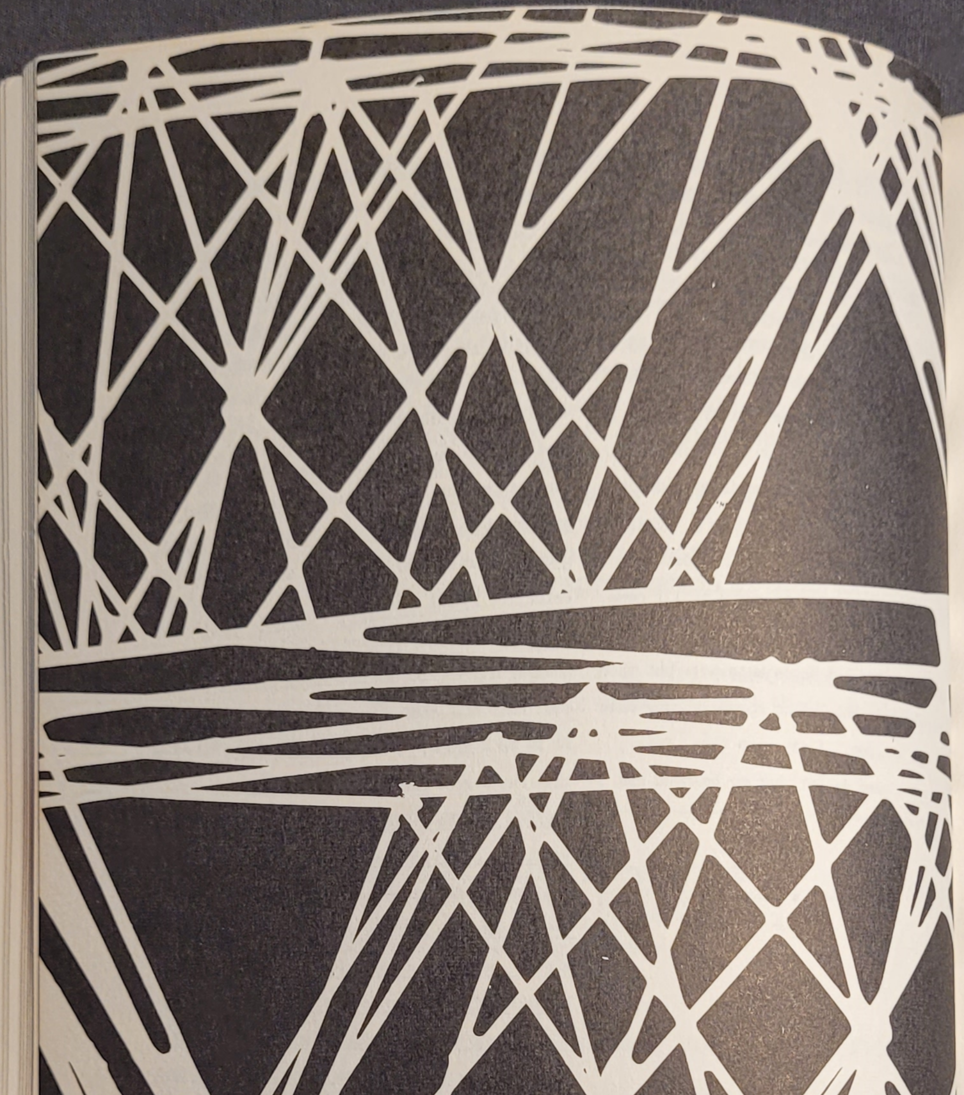

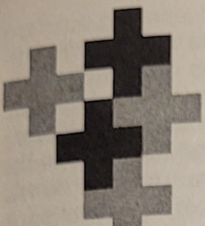

Cultural Differences and the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Dayle M. Bethel

We need men who can grow beyond ethnocentric dogmatism to see and appreciate and enjoy the vast range of differences and possibilities in human culture.

Several years ago in a religion class I came in contact with a book entitled *The Christ of Every Road*, by E. Stanley Jones, which contained the following statement:

> Religion had hardened into cold formulas; the dead hand of tradition reached out of the past and held everything under its paralysis; the leaders of religion had ceased to be prophets of the new day and had become priests of the things of yesterday. God was conceived as the Infinite Exactor of meticulous etiquette. The finished product of religion was the Pharisee standing in the temple thanking God that he had fulfilled this religious etiquette and that he was not therefore as other men.[1]

Are we going to be Pharisees or followers of Christ? Are we going to be priests of the things of yesterday or prophets of the new day for which the world waits in agony? That was the issue in Christ's day. That was the issue in Joseph Smith's day. That, I believe, is the central issue today. I would invite you to keep that issue in focus as we attempt to consider cultural differences and their relationship to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Before we can engage meaningfully in a discussion of cultural differences and their significance for Christian education and witness, we must direct attention to several preliminary matters. One of these is culture itself and what we mean by it. Secondly, we shall need to take into consideration human attitudes and behavior with respect to cultural differences. Third, we must consider the movement of history and the kind of world in which the cultural differences about which we speak exist. Finally, out of this understanding and within a common frame of reference, we will be in a position to discuss the implications of cultural differences for the task to which we have been called.

The Phenomenon of Culture

In its popular use the word *culture* usually refers to a refinement or cultivation. The cultured person is thought to be one who is well educated, well mannered, and refined in behavior; who can speak languages other than his own; who is familiar with history, literature, philosophy, or the fine arts. This is not, of course, what we mean by culture in our present discussion. *Culture*, as we are using the word, refers to all of the accepted and patterned ways of behavior of a given people. It is the sum total and the organization and arrangement of all of the group's ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. It also includes the physical manifestations of the group as exhibited in the objects which it makes—clothing, houses, tools, weapons, implements, books—and those parts of the natural world which they make some use of or regular response to.[2]

Some other ways of thinking about culture will be useful to note. One is that culture is learned and transmitted through social interaction. Another is that every culture hangs together; within each culture there is an organization or configuration that makes it an integrated whole. Thus, a change in one part of the culture affects all other parts. We may note, too, that culture is often defined as that part of our environment which is man-made, as opposed to the natural environment. It is impossible to understand or to appreciate the behavior of any person unless we know something about the man-made part of that person's environment, his culture. Thomlinson describes culture as having the following three aspects:

1. Technological. In man's struggle to wrest from his habitat the various necessary means of subsistence, he makes artifacts or physical objects. This material side of culture includes both the things man makes and the techniques for their use.
2. Sociological. The category of sociofacts or social organization includes the various groupings into families, clubs, religious sects, fraternities, and many others. This aspect also covers the economic and political structure. Culture is manifested through the social organization and the people in it.
3. Ideological. The value system refers to the way of looking at life—philosophical tenets, religious beliefs, and rules of behavior. Values are beliefs upon which people build their lives. Major American values are success, efficiency, progress, material comfort, equality, freedom, nationalism, conformity, and democracy.[3]

We will be most concerned in our discussion of cultural differences with the second and third of these aspects of culture; i.e., the sociological, that aspect which includes the organizations, the systems, the structures which men create and within which they interact in order to achieve their goals, and the ideological, that aspect of culture which includes the values, beliefs, and ideals of a given people.

It should be clear from the above discussion that while man shares with all other men certain basic needs and drives which are determined by his physical, emotional, and mental makeup, the particular means by which he meets these needs are determined by his culture, by where and specifically how he learns to cope with them. The fact that man meets his animal needs by cultural means creates for the student of man a paradox; for, as Peter Hammond observes, "*Homo sapiens* is extraordinarily flexible, capable of more adaptive variability than any other animal. Yet once he is conditioned by his culture to meet his needs in particular culturally approved ways, he often becomes so set in these ways that he would literally rather die than change them."[4] David Rodnick suggests the reason for this when he writes:

> If we have been reared to believe that our culture is absolute and not subject to change, that its concepts are not the effect of men's thoughts but eternal in our heritage, then we will resist new ideas or cultural change with strong emotional distaste and consider them threats to our stable estimate of ourselves. . . .[5]

It is quite clear that the decline, and decay, and death of individuals and societies are closely related to the degree to which they fail to remain open, flexible, and adaptive. In other words, openness, flexibility, and adaptiveness are characteristic of youth and vigor and life; inflexibility, rigidity, the closed mind are characteristic of decline, old age, and death.

Latter Day Saints, of all people, should understand this. To speak of revelation, to sing that cherished hymn, "We limit not the truth of God to our poor reach of mind,"[6] and not understand this basic fact of life and death is to miss the whole point of the Restoration. The Restoration was a call to men to openness, to continuous growth, to open-ended inquiry. The Restoration was a blow to the absolutistic, to the dogmatic, to the tendency for men to become rigid and inflexible. We hear much these days about self-renewal. John Gardner believes that only self-renewing persons and societies can expect to survive in tomorrow's post-industrial world.[7] This is just another way of saying what the Restoration movement attempted to say many years ago but failed to get across—even to Latter Day Saints. Openness and flexibility are life, while absolutism and dogmatism lead to death.

Attitudes Toward Cultural Differences

Students of culture have discovered that there is a widespread tendency for the members of cultural groups to feel that their particular culture is the best. The Greeks were one of the first groups to express concern about foreign influence. They labeled anyone who was not a Greek a "barbarian." The French describe non-French in a similar way. The Japanese have even developed a separate alphabet for writing words referring to non-Japanese persons and things. Many of the more isolated peoples of the world refer to themselves by terms which mean men or human beings. When Europeans first met Carib Indians, for example, the Caribs announced that "we alone are people."[8]

Anthropologists have a word for this tendency to believe that one's own tribe or cultural group is better than or superior to the tribes of others. The word is ethnocentrism. One anthropologist, Ashley Montagu, simply uses the word *tribalism* to designate this tendency. Montagu suggests that the civilized peoples of the world have scornfully relegated tribalism or ethnocentrism to the "primitive" peoples, while considering themselves wholly exempt from such "barbarism." Montagu insists, however,

> that the societies in which tribalism flourishes in its most dangerously developed forms are the societies which are among the most technologically highly developed nations in the world. In no "primitive" societies are such tribalistic excesses of belief and conduct practised as among the great nations of the Western world, and in civilized nations generally, whether of the Western world, the Middle East or the Far East. The tribal gods of civilized peoples are among the most vicious, and upon a scale surpassing all others, the most destructive in the world.[9]

Americans, Montagu concludes, are among the most tribalistic people in the world today.

The following paragraph written just a few weeks ago by a Graceland student as part of a paper on the American Indian illustrates Montagu's contention:

> The impact of the coming of the white man to the Americas cannot be overlooked in the rush to tell about the idealism and courage of the settlers. The white man was the last of many migrants who came to the Americas, and the one who caused the most destruction, pain, and cultural annihilation. His conquest has been regarded as the cruelest, darkest episode in human history. Not only did the white man overrun entire nations of people, he demanded authority over lives, territories, religious beliefs, and ways of life of every native group with which he came in contact. Untold numbers of tribes were enslaved, destroyed, scattered, killed. How can one convey through the written word, the dimensions of human tragedy, in loss of homes, dignity, cultural institutions, standards of security, material and intellectual achievements, and the freedom and liberty to direct their own life for millions of people. These things befell the peoples of the Americas with the coming of the white man. What worse fate could come upon a people than to be the victims of the powerful forces of "manifest destiny," racism, and "progress" which the white man used as excuses for carving out their own nation on top of the spilled blood of the original owners of the continent.[10]

It would be comforting to be able to refute Montagu and say that Americans have changed, that we are no longer ethnocentric, tribalistic, provincial in outlook. But one has only to open his eyes today to see that Americans are still imposing their will, their beliefs, their culture on other cultural groups.

It would perhaps be germane to our discussion to note that the majority of the members of the RLDS Church in the world are Americans. Are Latter Day Saints tribalistic? Do Latter Day Saints share this general tendency of Americans to believe that their culture, their beliefs, their way of doing things are superior to all others? Do Latter Day Saints seek to impose their beliefs and their will on other peoples and cultures? How we answer these questions will have a direct bearing on how we deal with the matter of cultural differences.

Cultural Differences in a Global Community

How we view cultural differences is vitally important. There are some who believe that our very survival as a species on this planet may hinge on whether men prove able to deal with this matter of their cultural differences forthrightly and intelligently. This is essentially what William Drake is saying when he writes that

> Contradictory *a priori* social absolutes, which continue to exist all over the globe, are at the root of much of the fear of global war. Many of the horrors of history have been carried out under the banner of absolute values, from the Spanish Inquisition to the Nazi gas chamber.[11]

Absolutism, dogmatism, authoritarianism, in other words, ethnocentrism, spawn distrust, hatred, suspicion, and fear. The person who is different, the group which is different, the strange and unfamiliar ways of doing things, the different ways of meeting human needs and desires are perceived as threatening to the ethnocentric person. Precisely these fears, suspicions, and distrusts arising from ethnocentric personalities feed the fires of hate, violence, and war in our suffering and tormented world. A peaceful world, a Zionic world, a world in which men and women and boys and girls can live with dignity and in freedom can never be built by ethnocentric people. Appreciation of cultural differences and of cultural heritages other than one's own develops only as people grow toward a comprehensive, pluralistic world outlook.

I submit, therefore, that our greatest need today is for a new breed, a new race of men. We need lucid men, comprehensive men, global men, men who grow beyond literacy to vital awareness of what it means to be a human being in their day and time. We need men who can grow beyond ethnocentric dogmatism to see and appreciate and enjoy the vast range of differences and possibilities in human culture. The world has always needed such men. But in our day we not only need them, we *must* have them. Survival is inconceivable without them. Furthermore, we cannot get along with a few such men, as has been the case in the past, while the mass of men remain in ethnocentric illusion and ignorance. Today the new man and mass man must become one.

But why? Why is the need so urgent just now? We are living in a new age. You and I, during the past decade-and-a-half, have lived through one of the great revolutionary periods in the history of life on this planet. We have stepped across the threshold into a new world. The old world was slow-moving and static. Cultures and peoples were scattered and isolated from each other. In that old world ethnocentric attitudes led, to be sure, to hatred, violence, and war; but these consequences of ethnocentrism were scattered here and there on the earth's surface and their toll in human misery and suffering, while very real to those who suffered, was nevertheless limited in scope and confined to specific areas of the world.

The new world is dynamic. Change—rapid, confusing, unsettling change—is its chief characteristic. There is nothing sinister or even very difficult to understand about this new kind of world. It simply differs in terms of the number and kinds of interactions which an individual can participate in, either actually or potentially. For example, a boy growing up on a homestead in Decatur County in Iowa in 1850 could interact with relatively few persons, or things, or ideas. The world as he experienced it probably consisted of fewer than a hundred persons. Even if he lived in Lamoni or Davis City, the number would not have been much higher. He probably did not meet more than half a dozen girls whom he could perceive as possible marriage partners. His choice of occupation was likewise limited. He probably had no contact with a non-European culture unless it were Indian or black; and he did not have to take either of these seriously because he had been conditioned to think of both as somehow subhuman, inferior, and perhaps even evil. If this boy were like many of his acquaintances, he might live and die without ever getting more than one hundred miles away from home. I grew up in this old world, not in the 1850's but in the 1930's.

Now, contrast that old world with the world your teen-age son experiences today. The number of interactions in which he participates and in which he can potentially participate has increased in geometric ratio. He lives not in an isolated, secluded, limited world but in a global community. When you stop to think about it, the implications of this new dimension in human interaction and the pace of change which accompanies it are fantastic and mind-boggling, but at the same time wonderful and exciting.

Mainly, we must understand that in this new world ethnocentric attitudes will inevitably lead to our destruction. No one would deny that it is dangerous for a child to have a handful of matches. The chances of his causing a major catastrophe are not too great, however, if he plays with them in his sandbox or on a baseball field. But if he carries those same matches with him into the haymow of his father's barn, the ingredients exist for a major disaster, including the possibility of the destruction of the child himself. The plight of modern man is very similar. As modern men we have crossed the threshold into a new world, but we are still ethnocentric men; and our ethnocentric attitudes are like lighted matches in a haymow.

And so I say again that the great need of our day is for the emergence of a new breed of men, the kind of men envisioned by the writer of that marvelous old hymn:

> These things shall be: a loftier race
> Than e'er the world hath known shall rise
> With flame of freedom in their souls,
> And light of knowledge in their eyes.[12]

We need a race of men who have the vision to see, in the words of another writer, that

> We live in a moment of history when radically new possibilities are opening before us. Possibilities for freedom or bondage, creation or destruction. And the power is within our hands to decide which direction the history of civilization will take. This power to decide is the sign of what it means to be alive today. . . . As much as we may wish for the security of another era, we cannot have it. Our situation is a new one and must be accepted for what it is.
>
> . . . For the first time man requires universality for his frame of reference. No longer is he allowed to be parochial, seeing only his own self, his own neighborhood, his own nation, or even his own culture. A radical interdependence of the peoples of the world is his situation. We recognize that the decision

> of one person, one nation, one culture affects us all. This places upon us a tremendous burden of responsibility for each decision that we make.[13]

C. Wright Mills has underscored the fact that we do not have such a breed of men today. Today's men, Mills observes, are confused, overwhelmed, and alienated by the change and, to them, the instability of the new world. They do not have the quality of mind that is essential, Mills insists, if man is to grasp the interplay of man and society, of biography and history, of self and world.[14] More recently Ferdinand Lundberg expressed essentially the same view. The population of the United States, he writes, is "emotionally simple and not in possession of sound knowledge and realistic judgment. Most of the population, whatever one may say on its behalf, is of this order, is quite uninformed and readily susceptible of being worked upon."[15]

Is this true within the church? Of course it is. The general membership of the church, the members of our congregations and branches, are no more able to function in today's world as responsible world citizens than the general run of Americans. We should be. If we had heeded such counsel which has come to us as that in Section 85:21 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, we would be better prepared to function as responsible twentieth century men and women. Our society faces a grave danger today because of this general unpreparedness of our people. Suzanne Keller writes that this danger lies

> in the informational gap between specialized leaders and the public, a gap that nullifies many of the rights of the public on paper. Ignorance of the public often encourages leaders to resort to irrational methods of persuasion and communication. In an age of mass communications, the power of leaders to manipulate public opinion is extraordinary. "The spectacle of an efficient elite maintaining its authority and asserting its will over the mass by the rationally calculated use of irrational methods of persuasion is the most disturbing nightmare of mass Democracy."[16]

Cultural Differences and the Gospel

The man who is alert to the pulse and passions of his time knows that this new race, this new breed of human being, is even now struggling to be born. He also knows that birth pains can be severe and that we cannot tell at this point whether the birth will be a live one or a miscarriage.

A central problem is that the cultural institutions to which we looked to bear and produce the new breed have failed in their task. Theoretically, there should have been a qualified generation prepared to cross over that threshold, cross over into Jordan if you will, and take responsibility for the new world. This has not come about. The liberal arts college, that institution which was to usher in the age of the new man, capitulated long ago. The lords and ladies of liberal education, the professors and the educators, are the ultimate example today of ethnocentric man. They have, in fact, become specialists in ethnocentrism; their chief aim in life is to produce, not the new breed, but carbon copies of themselves. One acute observer suggested recently that before education can talk about producing citizens for the new world, it will have to do something about the professors and educators themselves, many of whom, protected as they are in their cloistered halls, are not aware that the old world is gone.[17]

More devastating for us is the realization that the church, too, has not produced the new men for whom the world waits in suffering. The church was called to be the bride of the Lord, which would conceive and bear the new race. But you know and I know that this has not come to pass. All we have to do is look at our congregations to confirm that fact. It is necessary here to lay bare a serious perversion which grew up within the historical church. That perversion is the tenaciously held belief that our kind of conversion to Jesus Christ and our kind of submission to the symbolism of baptism are synonymous with or equivalent to the birth of the new man. May I suggest that if we hold this belief, and many Latter Day Saints do, we misinterpret the Scriptures and remain blind to actual reality. I will leave the matter of the Scriptures for you to review at your leisure and only point out what is obvious, that conversion and baptism, even the authoritative baptism insisted on by Latter Day Saints, has not produced the new breed of men.

Why is this the reality? Why can we not expect conversion alone to give birth to the new man? The answer is very simple. It is that a man, far more than we have been willing to admit, is a social creature, a social product. The social structures within which a man has lived in the past very largely determine what he is. And what he can become is very closely related to the nature of the social structures within which he will live in the future. Men easily recognize that a major difference between themselves and other forms of animal life is that instincts which are somehow carried in their genes determine the behavior of other animals while in man this is not the case. Men have been less willing to recognize and face up to a major implication of this fact, which is that man's social life performs the function in human experience that instinct performs in other animals. This opens up vast new possibilities for humans; but it also, if not recognized and understood, can be the means of his enslavement.

The realization of the importance and function of social structures in determining human behavior and attitudes has been present in the gospel from its earliest expressions. It has been forgotten again and again, however. This realization was one of the major elements which was "restored" in the Restoration movement. It is a major element in the doctrine of Zion. The redemption of the individual and the redemption of society are two parts of a single process; to neglect either part is to render redemption impossible for both individual and society. E. Stanley Jones has written of this whole matter in a very effective way:

> . . . if religion is to influence life, it cannot be embodied in personal attitudes alone. The principles and spirit of it must be embodied in the social order, for whatever is in the social order converts, in large measure, those under that order. If religion turns over the social, the economic, and the political to other ways of

> life, and hopes to influence the individual through personal contacts, it will be fighting a losing battle. The situation is loaded against its success. True, it will influence individuals here and there, and we must be grateful for that influence, but it makes religion the occasional and marginal instead of the central formative fact in life. Shall we rescue individual slaves and leave untouched the slave traffic? Shall we pick up individual drunkards and leave untouched the liquor traffic? Shall we gather up the wounded in war and attend to them and leave the war system operative? Shall we pick up the derelicts of a ruthlessly competitive order and give them doles and handouts, or shall we put justice and the love of God into the order so that this shall be unnecessary? Obviously, we must do both, for evil can be in the individual will and it can be in the collective will. There is such a thing as an evil soul and there is such a thing as an evil system. If we do not undertake to cure evil in the social order, then religion becomes an ambulance corps in human life picking up the wounded instead of a banner leading the army. In the film "Anthony Adverse" religion is seen tending to sick slaves and rescuing the aged and the infirm from cruelty, but doing nothing to stop the slave traffic itself. It was only softening the system; it was not changing it.
>
> When we make the Kingdom of God into a merely personal thing, we turn into a personal insurance policy what God intended to be a charter of social and personal redemption.
>
> If the objection is raised that if you get sufficient individuals converted, you will thereby of necessity change the social order, our reply is that this does not necessarily follow. For the social order is not made up of individuals now living—it is made up of inherited attitudes, institutions, customs, laws, and these exist, in large measure, independently of the individual wills now living. Change those individual wills and you do not of necessity change the social order. . . .[18]

Now, what does this mean in practical terms? What does this have to do with the birth of a new type of man within our own society? These questions bring us to the very heart of the problem of culture and cultural differences and the relationship of both to the gospel.

In every age God has called a people; a people who were to be *in* the world, a people who were to constitute a presence in the world, a people who were to be like salt or leaven, a people who were to penetrate the world and transform it, make it into something new, make it into the kingdom of God and his Christ. At the same time, God has warned that people not to be absorbed by the world, not to be swallowed up by it, not to lose their saltiness, not to be *of* the world.

Let's understand that when God speaks about the world, he is not talking about sex, or tobacco, or even a can of Schlitz. He's talking about *systems*, the systems of this world which have power to make or break people; *systems*, people structures, those patterned arrangements which people develop as a part of their culture to achieve ends and objectives. The problem is that so often these systems get set up, and then, instead of serving people, people become slaves of the system. And it is precisely when the church, the people of God, fails to see this happening that it becomes *of* the world. God set the church in the world to see to it that the systems of the world serve people, build people, fulfill people. God set the church in the world, among other purposes, to see to it that the systems of the world do not destroy people.

What was it that Jesus condemned most in his day? Did he condemn the woman who was found misusing sex? No! He taught her; he counseled with her; he reasoned with her. He said something like this: "You poor, mixed-up soul. You have missed some of the richest experiences of life. There is so much more to life and sex than is dreamed of in your philosophy. Go, and sin no more." Did Jesus spend time or energy in attacking the Roman government? No! He knew that the heart of the Roman system was far beyond the reach of the Jews. There was just one thing which, according to the Scriptures, Jesus blasted; and that was something the Jews could have done something about, something they *should* have been responsible for. What was that? The whole rotten temple system of Jewish society which had a stranglehold on all phases of Jewish life. And I mean he blasted that! Hypocrites, he called them, den of thieves, vipers. Did you ever stop to think about what or who it was that killed Jesus? About what that phrase really means, "He died for our sins."?

It was a group of men like you and me who hung Jesus to a cross. It was not the sin of Mary Magdalene or some Roman soldier that killed Jesus. It was a group of men who believed to the bottom of their hearts that *they* had *the* doctrine. It was a system which killed Jesus Christ, a system filled with men who didn't want to let go of their illusion that *they* and *they alone* knew the true doctrine. Yet that which many of us have been calling the doctrine of Christ is not the doctrine of Christ at all; it is only a part of it, and a small part at that. The principle of revelation is a part of the doctrine of Christ, yet we have scarcely begun to explore its meaning and implications, let alone make application of it in our individual and corporate lives. The principle of common consent is a part of the doctrine of Christ; the principle of creativity referred to in *Doctrine and Covenants* 58:6 is a part of the doctrine of Christ. But these principles run against the authoritarian tradition of our culture, and thus we have given little attention to them. The principle of depth education through group inquiry is a part of the gospel of Christ as *Doctrine and Covenants* 85:21 called to our attention many years ago; however, for the most part Latter Day Saints do not know what depth education is. The principle of restoration is a part of the doctrine of Christ, yet most of the members of the church think of the "restoration" as a single event which happened in 1830.

As in Jesus' day, so in every age God calls the church to see to it that the systems of this world serve people, build people, fulfill people; that they do not crush or destroy people. He has set it *in* the world for that purpose. Now, what happens when the church fails to carry out this task? What happens when the church becomes *of* the world? The task goes undone. No one calls the economic systems, the educational systems, the political systems of this world to be responsible and accountable. The systems of this world hurt and crush the life out of people, destroy people; but there is no one to speak out, no one to care.

Unfortunately, the church of our day has become *of* the world.

The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has become *of* the world. It has become so much of the world that its members for the most part cannot see what the systems of our society are doing to people. Latter Day Saints have swallowed the systems of this world hook, line, and sinker. Those systems have become sacred to Latter Day Saints (just as the systems which killed Jesus had become sacred to the Jews). Those systems have come to be synonymous with the "truth" to Latter Day Saints, so much so that we are not able much of the time to separate the principles of the systems from the principles of the gospel.

Let me very briefly bring to your attention some of the systems of our own culture which need to be called into question. Are you aware, for instance, that while millions of our countrymen are sunk in poverty, a few thousand fabulously rich individuals and families own the major part of the real wealth of the nation? Are you aware that while a large part of the average American's income is siphoned off in taxes, there were last year in this country scores of millionaires who never paid a cent in taxes? Have you ever questioned the American economic system in the way David Bazelon does in the following paragraphs?

> Very simply, the reason there is so much difficulty in legitimating the corporation is that it is an illegitimate institution. It is an authoritarian form of industrial government in a purportedly democratic society. . . .
>
> This governmental giveaway to "private" profit-seeking enterprize has characterized American economic history from the building of the railroads to the development of atomic energy and communication by means of space satellites. In fact, it is our economic history. . . .
>
> The kind of corporate paper system we now live under is not only not provided for in the constitution, it was not even a necessary outgrowth of our early history. Somewhere along the way a choice was made: the leading people in society decided to unleash the impulse to get rich quick by stealing—and they decided to join in the fun. So they stole the continent, with the cooperation of most governments.[19]

Let me ask you further if you ever questioned our compulsory educational system in the way Albert Einstein questioned it:

> One had to cram all this stuff into one's mind, whether one liked it or not. This coercion had such a deterring effect that, after I passed the final examination, I found the consideration of any scientific problems distasteful to me for an entire year. . . . It is in fact nothing short of a miracle that the modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry . . .'[20]

Or in the way A. H. Maslow questions it:

> Children in the usual classroom learn very quickly that creativity is punished, while repeating a memorized response is rewarded, and concentrate on what the teacher wants them to say, rather than on understanding the problem.[21]

Or Carl Rogers:

> I maintain that there is a desperate need for the creative behavior of creative individuals. . . . Many of the serious criticisms of our culture and its trends may best be formulated in terms of a dearth of creativity. . . . In education we tend to turn out conformists, stereotypes, individuals whose education is "completed," rather than freely creative and original thinkers.[22]

Let me conclude these remarks with some observations about the church and culture and cultural differences. I submit, first of all, that a basic, fundamental aspect of the gospel in all ages has been the growth of men and women from life-styles that are closed, ethnocentric, absolutistic in outlook to life-styles that are open, comprehensive, pluralistic, and worldwide in outlook. This, I believe, is at the very heart of the gospel, the very heart of the Restoration movement, the very heart of the principle of revelation. The church is called to the task of producing such persons, but it can only accomplish this task as it recognizes the social nature of man and the important part the social structure of a man's culture play in molding his life and personality.

This brings us to the central understanding that culture can be changed only from within. It is the church in the United States which must deal with the unjust systems and structures of our culture. It is the church in the United States, drawing on the heritage and principles of the gospel *as we understand them*, which alone can transform these systems and structures and this culture into the culture of the kingdom of God and his Christ.

As members of the Church of Jesus Christ in America, we have no moral right to condemn or pass judgment on cultural elements or practices of people in India or Japan or Nigeria unless we are dealing with the ungodly dimensions of our own culture. How can we possibly have the gall, for instance, to jump on a few poor peasants in India who followed the normal marriage practices of their culture in the past when we have sat idly by while a handful of Americans literally stole billions and billions of American wealth and condemned one-third of our people to conditions of terrible, personality-destroying poverty? How can we presume to lecture to the people of Korea or Germany or the Philippines about the gospel when we have shared in the enslavement of black people in our culture for more than three centuries and now see our nation torn apart by racial strife?

But even if we were dealing in an adequate way with the unjust dimensions of our own culture, we still would not be justified in judging or forcing change of cultural elements or practices of other peoples according to our views. Just as only we can deal with corporate robbery in American culture, so only Indians can deal with polygamy in Indian culture, only Japanese can deal with the exploitation of workers in Japanese culture, and so on.

What we can do as members of the American church is to share our testimony of the meaning of the gospel for our lives and in our culture. We can share our faith in those basic principles of Christian life: the sacredness, dignity, and worth of every human personality; attitudes of praise and thanksgiving and appreciation toward God; attitudes of responsibility, compassion, and love toward other men and women. We can share these broad, pervasive principles of the gospel with the churches in other cultures; but we must leave each people to evolve in its understanding, appreciation, and application of the gospel at its own pace and in its own cultural style.

Recently I read an editorial which sums up very well the basic cultural understanding about which we are speaking. Let me conclude with a portion of that editorial:

> The evolution of the role of women in our own culture is a case in point. In our own society women have been discriminated against for centuries. It is only within very recent years that women have come to be perceived as individuals and personalities in their own right who were created on terms of equality with men. The practices that reflect exploitation and discrimination against women have not yet been entirely eliminated from our society.
>
> It would, of course, have been absurd in our culture a hundred years ago to assert that a man could not be baptized until he had established his family on a democratic basis. Yet, was not the enslavement of women in our culture, an enslavement in which women were considered the property of authoritarian husbands, every bit as sinful in the eyes of God as the treatment of women in a polygamous culture?
>
> It is clear that in the American church, as well as in American culture as a whole, the present recognition of women as persons in their own right, worthy to be equal with men, has only been arrived at through years of growing and struggling to understand the meaning of the gospel.
>
> In view of this, are we justified in demanding that [other] cultures . . . accept the dictates of the American church without question? Ought we not be willing to let these churches struggle to understand the meaning of the gospel for their lives and their culture, growing in understanding through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, even as we ourselves have had to do?[23]

Through sharing with the church in other cultures in this way we can assist those churches to see themselves and their task in a new light and in broader perspective. This is what has happened to us during the past decade as we, in turn, have been enriched and our vision broadened by the insights and contributions of the churches in India, Japan, Nigeria, and other cultures vastly different from our own.

In conclusion let me suggest again that you and I are called to decide if we will be priests of the things of yesterday or prophets of a new day and a new age in human experience. The destiny of the world hangs in the balance. The culture of the twenty-first century hangs in the balance. We are called to create the future. We are called to share in the shaping of culture. That is the meaning of Zion. That is the meaning of the kingdom of God.

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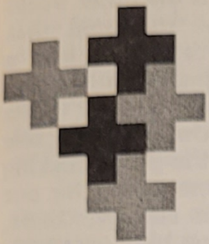

Why Am I Afraid To Tell You Who I Am?

Paul M. Edwards

For a movement dedicated to man's search for love the fear of our own self-image—the belief that we can only be loved if we are unknown—is a tragedy.

Once again the studied opinion of the upper quorums of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has been to restrict early church materials from the probe of those anxious to discover and interpret the identity of the movement. The Council of Twelve has refused to open pre-1900 council minutes for historical research.[1] In considering this decision and seriously looking at the nature of my own commitment to history, I am reminded of John Powell's marvelous little book, *Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am?*[2] In this work Powell asks the title question and answers, "because if I tell you who I am, you may not like who I am, and it's all that I have."[3] Powell suggests and I affirm that the most sincere form of love is the honesty which allows knowledge of the self.

For a movement dedicated to man's search for love the fear of our own self-image—the belief that we can only be loved if we are unknown—is a tragedy I do not willingly accept. Because of reasons drawn from the movement itself I continue to care. In caring I am drawn to comment again on the implications of the movement's continued self-isolation and the administrative church's concept—or lack of it—concerning the institutional history. I feel that the failure to respond to the call of contemporary man in search of his history is yet one more of the ever mounting evidences that we are being institutionally disinherited. It is indeed strange that after years of begging our people to interest themselves in history we are now afraid of their interest. We continue to condemn our fathers to having lived in vain by the fact that their dedication and their beliefs are hidden in the fears and insecurities of those few of our movement who fear their past, men frightened by the idea of us knowing who we are.

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History, as Diderot was supposed to have said, is the other world of philosophers. By the same token it may be suggested that contemporary theology is the other world of history. If ever a movement existed that could learn from the developments in history, it is the Reorganized Church. If ever the familiarity with one's own identity could have been most validly used, it is now. Yet with few exceptions such insights have not yet filtered into the policy-making body, nor, with the present attitude, will they. One reason for our failure "moving into the world" is that we are such strangers there, not believing—in fact not daring to believe—that we have ever been there before. We have not relived our memory because we have become involved in describing our history as something we own. Our respect is for proof, not information. The climate of our decisions, our moralizations of amoral facts, are the prices we pay for seeking an archaeological rather than a historical foundation.

The question of ownership of artifacts is quite different than the ownership of history. An artifact is tangible, like a page of a diary. It may be owned. Such ownership is often used by the bureaucrats to try and control history, as in our case. We tend to be nauseated by the dictator who burns books or rewrites history, but we grant "the peace of peacemakers" to those who relentlessly alter our institutional ego by hiding or tearing out the pages of our fathers' diaries. Is it any wonder we become suspect even of ourselves?

History, which is the interpretation of our "living of the past," cannot be owned. Attempts to do so are disastrous. The records of this institution can be hidden. Yet documented contributions are not immune to the process of human criticism and evaluation. For this process is how history becomes literature—how the past becomes a living memory of contemporary decisions—how the story becomes our story. It is how we discover that our common denominator lies in our hope that we, unlike our fathers, will not have lived in vain.

This is not the place for a long discourse on the philosophy of history. Such discourses may well have been partially responsible for the growth of our "silent minority." But perhaps it is still time for a plea to take seriously the spheres of our becoming while we still share the last spark of interest in our collective being. I do not now expect that those to whom this decision falls will be changed by my argument. Nor do I have faith that the people of the church, sensing the need for some identity of the institution which represents them, will rise to instruct a more responsible decision. I only hope that those who seek to understand the nature of the institution will recognize that the reason they will not tell us who we are is that they are afraid we will not like us, and we are all they have.

Some years ago Froude wrote, "It often seems to me as if history was like a child's box of letters, with which we can spell any word we please. We have only to pick out such letters as we want, arrange them as we like, and say nothing about those which do not suit our purpose."[4] There is a great deal to be said for this description of history, especially when talking about the Reorganization. Froude fails to consider, however, that the outcome is also dependent on the availability of letters and the child's ability to spell. For the first we are dependent upon the game played by previous generations and just how well they preserved the vast heritage of available letters. The second, while more a matter of our control, also depends on our understanding something of the basic nature of the game.

In most cases the available letters are factors prior to our joining the game. The ability to spell is certainly related to the rules of the language, which are admittedly prescriptive, but of obvious operational value. Our selectivity is greatly dependent upon the attention or the apathy of the other members of the game. If we play alone, then history can be whatever jumble of letters appeases our aesthetic desires. But if we play with a group, the game becomes more like Scrabble; for we are watched, reminded of our poor spelling, sympathized with because of the lack of letters; and, most important, we are penalized for the unused portion that we cannot explain.

The center of the events of history lie, as in this game, in the character of human beings, for the human brain is the midwife. The mind as the memory of man deals with the totalities that make up institutional and personal pasts. The interpretations of the record of those points of solidified duration have significance both for our time and for the future players of the game. Unfortunately, the historical perspective and responsibility of those involved in the Restoration movement have not been such that they saw the need to keep as much of the memory as possible. Because of this the game is far too often played with too few blocks of letters. The game is further confused by the fact that most of the letters have survived either by accident or by the curiosity of their extreme nature.

The responsibility for the preservation of those materials which still exist belongs with the administrative church, primarily the Joint Council. This responsibility would be to lead the church at large and the larger community of interested persons in the job of preserving, collecting, and making available the records, artifacts, and interpretations of the past. This does not in any way imply, however, the administrative ownership of history. The long held assumption that the institution owns its history has resulted in the acceptance of institutional positions as history. The years of selection of events to be remembered have been a major cause of the unrest of the present age.

Institutions are inclined toward historical conservatism, and in the interplay of stress they often select historical perspective by preserving history bureaucratically. A good illustration is the lack of archival material concerning World War I available in Great Britain. One reason for this was a series of patriotic paper drives held in 1918 in which vital records of 1914 were carried off under the stress of the need for paper. What the clerks saved, of course (and they are still available), were the official records of paper drive quotas "met" by the various departments.

It must also be noted that our hierarchy does not take history, archives, and artifact materials seriously. Many of the artifacts of the church's history have been ignored and are now gone forever. With them goes the opportunity for future involvement with the past. Our reaction to many of our historic properties is an indication of our inactivity: Joseph Smith's farm in Lamoni, the Kirtland property, Nauvoo, and Plano just to mention a few. Their contribution calls for restoration. I do not mean by this the proposed public gimmickry of the Restoration Trails. Restoration means historical preservation, not paint and minor repairs. The value of these properties is in question when they are seen in terms of public selling, missionary structures, or when they are violated by misrepresented emphasis. In this respect the Restoration Trail looks very much like a primrose path.

Despite the valiant effort of the Church Historian's Office little of the oral history of our movement is being preserved. The reasoning is that neither the time nor the money exists to make the hours of tape necessary. One reason the money has other priorities is that we continue to maintain the idea that decisions made at the upper levels are somehow preserved in heaven, not in archives. Given this attitude there is no reason to investigate, or even to record, decision making. Such an attitude becomes both a cause and an effect. It causes the belief that decisions are above reproach and the process not worth study because they are made in some special, almost mystical way. It produces an effect because the lack of preservation of the failures means that the humanity of the decision-makers is never recognized. In this way decisions and decision-makers are placed apart from their responsibility to the people who are altered by their decisions.

Another indication of the lack of seriousness is in the failure to offer encouragement for the movement to record and to interpret its own past. This is not to say that we are not periodically told of this institutional interest: history committees have been appointed; once every decade or so we have a history conference; the pages of the *Herald* are "open to historic articles"; Herald House is "open to the publication" of these materials. But even the most casual participant in the field of historical interest must question the seriousness of these comments. The interest is not there. The concern is not there. The acceptance is not there. And these "encouragements" are tossed off like promises of oil to a squeaky wheel. The acceptance, the listening, the indication of serious acceptance are completely lacking. The history committee, in existence some seven years, has been totally ignored, and with it hundreds of hours of time and effort put in by a whole parade of qualified members. History conferences are briefings, not conferences. The *Herald* is a house organ and ignores materials that might be "confusing to the uninformed clientele." The Herald Publishing House seems unable to publish anything either controversial or that might lose money. Such works are unpublished or must be published by secular presses, thus making them suspect.

Men and women raised on the idea that they can contribute by becoming well versed in particular fields find that the church is not only not interested in their talents but scared to death of them. Researchers both in and out of the movement find that they are refused materials, often materials that are openly available at other more inconvenient locations. Robert Flanders was condemned for not using more RLDS sources by the very persons who refused to allow him to use RLDS sources. During some recent research I received excellent cooperation from the LDS Church, the Utah State Historical Society, the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, and the Smithsonian Institute but fought to a standstill when I tried to get permission to see (not steal) materials in the hands of officials of my own denomination. The problem seems to be that somehow if the word gets out we will not be able to save the phenomenon.

In saving the phenomenon the church's view is still concerned with a story, not with history. Inez Smith Davis's *The Story of the Church* is just that, a story. We surely have outgrown this by now. The past must be seen as a part of the thinking of the modern movement, just as each of us is working into our contemporary situation through our memories of past experiences, methods of response and reaction. At this point we are talking about history as a clue to identity, not as a tool. It is not a public relations gimmick or a proof; it is involvement. The ignorance of history makes decision-making and position analysis free from the impact of memory or evaluation. It is like finding the letters from the box scattered on the floor where they have dropped and assuming that they must spell something. All too often this happens and we find ourselves frantically readjusting the rules of spelling to incorporate what we find. One reason we become so upset by tidbits of our past which we discover is that we have put the "story" together without considering any information which might stand as a challenge. This is not history's fault. It is ours. But it does not have to be this way. In the framework of our awareness each of us is a selective collector. In being so we create a historical perspective which best explains the present situation to us. We are living with today's view of the past, a view which would normally challenge yesterday's view of the past. Unless challenged these past views become myths and folktales which often develop into spiritual hang-ups far more real as problems than they are as history.

Careless collecting, destroying, ignoring rob men of the immortality of time which is born in our dealing with the past. We are, after all, our grandchildren's line to their grandfathers. When we scatter this by ignoring the memory, then we have seen fit to break the life of time for an unguarded moment of fear.

We are desperately in need of monography, of speculative history, of the analysis of archive evaluation, of oral preservation, of vast areas of original research, and some honest and critical questions. This is possible only in an attitude of openness on the part of those who, because of their temporary responsibility, control the major documents and artifacts of history. The decisions are Joint

Council decisions; and because they have assumed the power, they must bear the responsibility.

When we begin—and it is long past that time—we are going to have to do so in the spirit of our own concern. Personal and collective appeals for the opening of "secret," several-decades-old information have been refused by the quiet process of individual ignoring. Apparently people who are interested are going to have to approach the situation in such a way as to require the availability of material. While in no way suggesting a threat, I do propose that the time has come when history is going to be written anyway. History is now being interpreted. If our sources are not available, then private and other-directed resources will be used. Our beginnings would be better undertaken by those who are willing to be honest and concerned and who will recognize that their actions are also a part of the spiritual and social well-being of the body. The other alternative is to learn about our identity from those who have no belief in the dignity of that identity.

"Clio is a most exasperating muse." As I have come to know her just a little, I find that she is rarely loyal and generally less than kind. But she is surprisingly honest; and while not attractive as a leader, she is most certainly an essential and active partner for men who wish to face the future. She demands far more than she will give and is rarely willing to speak kindly of those who court her. She claims great strength but is weak unless protected by those who respect her honor. But of all the things that can be said, the most important of all, I am sure, is that Clio cannot be ignored and wise men do not try.

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1. Clare D. Vlahos sought permission from the Council of Twelve for use of the 1885 Council of Twelve minutes in connection with his article, "The Challenge to Centralized Power: Zenus H. Gurley, Jr., and the Prophetic Office" (March 1971 *Courage*, 141-58). After he failed to gain access, *Courage* formally requested that he be allowed to consult these minutes. The Twelve turned down the request. An Editorial Committee editorial questioned this policy ("Who Owns Our History," December 1970 *Courage*, 109-10). *Courage* called the attention of the Council of Twelve to the editorial, and invited their response. A reply from the council simply reaffirmed the council's policy. At no point did the Council of Twelve explain the reasons for such a closed policy, even when asked to. Apparently they feel they are not under the obligation to defend their official position to the membership of the church.
2. John Powell, *Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I am?* (Chicago: Argus Communication, 1970). The title of this article is taken from this work as well.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
4. Froude, *Short Stories* (London: n.p., 1888).

Paul M. Edwards is Chairman of the Division of Social Science at Graceland College, Lamoni, Iowa.

The Draft and Its Mythology

John M. Swomley, Jr.

Our responsibility, if we still value freedom, is to end the military draft and to say "No" to all efforts to expand it into general conscription for labor purposes.

Conscription, as we have known it, beginning with Napoleon, was intended to produce mass armies cheaply so as to gain or hold territory. It has been understood to be the "taproot of militarism" for two reasons. It gave the top professionals or officers virtually unlimited access to young men so as to indoctrinate and use them as they desired. It also compelled young men to enter the military and thus abandon their normal civil liberties.

The degree to which our society has been militarized is evident in the fallacious myths set forth in defense of conscription and still believed by otherwise rational people.

- *Myth one:* "If the draft ends the United States will not be able to maintain large overseas garrisons and therefore we shall return to isolationism." The opposite of isolationism is not imperialism, evident in control of land by overseas garrisons. It is world cooperation, evident in international organization such as the United Nations and in conferences seeking disarmament. Militarists confuse national military expansion overseas with internationalism.

- *Myth two:* "If the draft ends we shall have a career or professional military." The Air Force, the Navy, most of the Marine Corps, and a part of the Army have been and are volunteers. More than two thirds of the armed forces are true (not draft-induced) volunteers. The officers who make the decisions are all volunteers. The method of original enlistment, whether by draft or volunteering, does not determine professionalism. A career army is built by long-term reenlistments and could only be prevented by prohibiting all reenlistments. Militarists confuse the initial method of voluntary enlistment with a career or professional army in order to argue for a draft.

• *Myth three:* "Ending the draft means reliance on mercenaries." The term *mercenaries* refers to foreign paid troops. All American military men receive pay and presumably have more reasons than money for entering the armed forces. The U.S. has used more mercenaries in the Vietnam war than in any previous war, while using large number of U.S. draftees. There is no necessary relation of mercenaries either to a draft or a voluntary force, but militarists persist in their claims.

• *Myth four:* "Volunteers won't fight in unpopular wars. Therefore the draft is needed." Once a man is in the armed forces he must obey orders whether he is a volunteer or a conscript. A contract, voluntarily entered, does not give a choice of nonperformance. Volunteers in the Green Berets, Marines, and Air Force fought in Vietnam as well as drafted soldiers.

• *Myth five:* "The draft is largely responsible for the unpopularity of the war in Vietnam, because families with draftees or those about to be drafted have been the chief opponents of the war." Many of the chief opponents and demonstrators in the streets were students with deferments, theological students, clergy, etc., who were not vulnerable to the draft. It is significant that with the ending of student deferments there have been fewer demonstrations, but this appears to have no cause-effect relationship.

• *Myth six:* "The draft will civilianize the army or at least diffuse professional military influence." On the contrary, the Army drills and indoctrinates civilians. Is the all-volunteer Navy or Air Force more militaristic than the Army? In all three branches new recruits enter monthly from civilian life. There is no evidence that drafted men disobey orders more often or act more humanely toward Vietnamese villagers than first-term volunteers who have received the same military training. Is one son who volunteers more likely to be militarized than his brother who is drafted? Civilian control of the military must be in the hands of full-time civilians, not former civilians under the command of their officers.

• *Myth seven:* "Responsibility to society or to country requires forced military service." This assumes that non-military contributions to society are not as significant as military ones. It also assumes that a free society can be maintained or served best by depriving some members of society of their freedom. Forcing people to do what the government decides regardless of their values and abilities is the essence of totalitarianism rather than democracy.

• *Myth eight:* "Pay adequate to induce volunteering will result in an army composed of the poor." The very poor who cannot qualify physically because of poor nutrition and little medical care during childhood are not acceptable under either the draft or the higher volunteer standards. The President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force said: "Our research indicated that an all-volunteer force will not differ significantly from the current force of conscripts and volunteers." The Department of Defense figures (see below) on educational level reveal how many volunteers came from those able to afford college and able to continue through high school without dropping out to work or because of disabilities associated with poverty or minority frustration.

Table on Education Prior to Military Service
(figures represent thousands)

Those born in 1938 who entered military service	Completed 12 years of school	13-15yrs	16+yrs.
Volunteer	191.2	36.9	5.2
Draftees	35.6	17.1	5.5
Officers	0.1	1.3	35.9
Those born in 1947 who entered military service			
Volunteers	230.8	44.1	5.3
Draftees	21.9	10.5	3.4
Officers	2	1.2	34.3

- *Myth nine:* "Adequate pay will lead to an all black or largely black army." Since most blacks are living near or below the poverty level, the same response can be made as was made to an "army of the poor." The President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force projected, on the basis of research, one percentage point more of blacks in the armed forces under a voluntary than a conscript force. It also said: "Blacks who joined a voluntary force presumably have decided for themselves that military service is preferable to the other alternatives available to them. . . . Denial of this opportunity would reflect either bias or a paternalistic belief that blacks are not capable of making the 'right' decisions concerning their lives."

- *Myth ten:* "The draft is more equitable and hence more democratic than a voluntary system." This assumes that the equality of involuntary servitude rather than freedom is the essence of democracy. Equal treatment under compulsion even if it could be achieved is not the basis for or evidence of a free society. Those who foster this myth hope we will think of equitability or even equality among those forced to serve. Instead those forced into the Army are exploited by the more powerful adults and treated as powerless second-class citizens. The draft is pushed principally by wealthy men like Senator Edward Kennedy, by other comfortable politicians, and by well-paid generals. As John Galbraith put it: "The draft survives principally as a device by which we use compulsion to get young men to serve at less than the market rate of pay."

The conscript is taxed the difference between the military pay he gets and the rate of pay that would induce him to volunteer. A man who would be induced by $4500 a year to enlist, but receives only $2000 as a draftee, pays an annual tax of $2500. If he were drafted out of, or prevented from accepting, a civilian job paying $6000 a year, his tax would be $4000. The Kennedys and others talk about draft reform while opposing a decent wage that would make the draft unnecessary.

In addition to these ten myths designed to perpetuate the military draft, there is a current proposal for labor conscription, deceptively called "national service." It is intended as a device to force all teen-agers either into the military or into some alternate form of government work such as education, conservation, land and water reclamation, or social service in depressed or ghetto areas. The assumptions behind it are the same as those of totalitarian philosophers, that everyone is obligated to work for the state, that collective or group discipline is to be fostered by the state, that since we owe so much to the state we, or in this case powerless youth, should work at little or no pay.

A free society is based on the assumption that the state exists to serve its citizens, that there is nothing dishonorable about being paid for work, that a man fulfills his obligation to society not in a period of compulsory service but through his lifelong vocation and his voluntary participation in civic organizations.

National service is nationalist rather than internationalist in its orientation. It assumes that the nation-state may do what is constitutionally forbidden to private employers—place persons into involuntary servitude. Millions of people who are unemployed or underemployed could be induced by adequate wages to work in government-sponsored projects. Instead those who want national service prefer to compel those who are employed, or preparing for their vocations, to work at jobs they otherwise would not have chosen.

Some proposals for national service are modeled on the kind of alternate service required of conscientious objectors. They are drafted but assigned to work for approved employers or organizations. Should the state through national service assign drafted youth to work in churches or hospitals, or should we assume that voluntary work for a church or hospital serves society better? What happens if a church or other organization is not approved by the national service agency? Is it the business of government to approve voluntary organizations?

Our society has millions of young people in colleges preparing for a lifetime of service or at work building roads, teaching school, or farming, etc. If there has been any erosion among other youth of the idea of competent voluntary service in our society, perhaps we should ask whether the long-continued peacetime draft is the reason. That draft has been the basis also for what General Hershey called "channeling" of young men into jobs deemed to be in the national interest.

"Channeling" forced young men into teaching who didn't want to teach and into science, engineering, and other positions. Channeling involved deferments or alternatives to the draft for those who would take deferrable jobs. National service implies a permanent draft with some going into the military and others being forced to serve the national interest.

Our responsibility, if we still value freedom, is to end the military draft and to say "No" to all efforts to expand it into general conscription for labor purposes. Both Nazi Germany and Communist Russia have relied on compulsory labor camps. We do not want their equivalent here.

John M. Swomley, Jr., is Professor of Christian Ethics at Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Missouri; this article is reprinted with permission from the May 15, 1971, issue of "Engage," a publication of the Board of Christian Social Concerns of the United Methodist Church.

EDITORIALS

Toward Cooperation With Utah

On March 20, five members of the Reorganized Church attended the Mormon History Association conference held at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. The Mormon historians at the conference received them in a very hospitable manner. They showed a genuine interest in what is happening in the Reorganized Church and wanted to have further contact between people of the two faiths.

Paul Edwards of Graceland College presented a paper on the poetry and painting of David H. Smith. William Berrett of Brigham Young University gave a presentation on the paintings of C. C. A. Christensen. Mark McKiernan, a history professor at Idaho State University and a member of the Reorganized Church, read a paper entitled, "Sidney Rigdon and the Historians."

At an informal dinner Richard Howard was asked to give some remarks about the archives at the Auditorium in Independence. A good deal of respect was evident for his scholarship, as reflected in the fact that his book, *Restoration Scriptures,* was given the association's annual award as the best book on Latter Day Saint history for 1969.

The men from the Reorganized Church went away from the conference renewed in their conviction that the time for an end to our traditional combative attitude toward our Utah cousins is long overdue. Obviously, differences of doctrine and practice will continue to exist, but it is time that we sought to understand each other, rather than each seeking means to minimize the other. Scholarship in both churches has often been defensive and apologetic. Hopefully, a greater degree of direct contact between members of the two faiths will lead to a more objective study of the common heritage which we share.

Let us hope that in the near future cooperation will be more firmly established as the rule with regard to relations with our fellow Latter-day Saints. Is it not unfortunate that there is so little contact between leaders of the two largest Mormon churches? Why should these two institutions in various localities go their separate ways, as though the other group did not exist? Why should it not be possible, for example, for the two churches to cooperate in preserving historic Mormon sites and in making the resources of the Latter-day Saint heritage available to interested tourists and scholars? We hope we have seen the last of the rudeness of argumentative tour guides who forget that Mormon tourists are their invited guests when they visit sites owned and operated by the Reorganized Church. Should it not be possible for members of the two churches to come together occasionally for discussion, worship, and fellowship?

We hope *Courage* serves in part as a vehicle for increasing discussion among members of the various Mormon churches. In recent issues we have had several book reviews in which the author of the book and the author of the review are members of the two largest Mormon churches. In the March issue we had an article on "Editing the Revelations for Publication," by Melvin J. Petersen of the College of Religious Instruction at Brigham Young University. We have other articles and reviews planned for future issues of *Courage.* Hopefully this will include discussion of some of the smaller Mormon groups.

It is surely time for the negative spirit which has characterized so much of previous contacts with the Utah Mormons to give way to a new spirit that is cooperative, honest, and seeks understanding.

Editorial Committee

Mr. Elliott's Question Considered

James Elliott of Florissant, Missouri, raised a most interesting question in his letter published in the March issue of *Courage*. He asked, "How does the true believer ignore the disconfirmation of church history (Scriptures, first vision, etc.) and how does the cultural RLDS"—as exemplified by Wayne Ham—"rationalize his continued support of the church?" He then stated that "this dichotomy should be explored further."

Not long ago I had an occasion to talk with a former church official (who could be called a cultural RLDS) regarding the historical problem of the *Book of Mormon*. This official had once found himself in the unenviable situation of attempting to explain to a group of RLDS elders the intellectual problems involved in accepting the *Book of Mormon* as a history of pre-Columbian people in the Western Hemisphere.

Predictably, the group clung to the traditional view of the *Book of Mormon*, perceiving that an erosion of belief in the book as divinely dictated history could bring down the entire theological house.

My friend lamented their attitude, however, and went on to wonder why the group of elders could not realize that a belief or lack of it in the divine origins of the *Book of Mormon* "did not matter" to their belief in the church as a whole. He was suggesting that the *Book of Mormon* could be considered an irrelevance to the basic mission or role of the church.

In later reviewing our conversation, two thoughts occurred to me. One was that the group of elders could not accept my friend's evidence without doing violence to their deepest held beliefs and allegiances. It was psychologically necessary for them to deny the evidence, no matter how rationally presented.

My second thought was that my friend was employing the same kind of protective mechanism, only on a more sophisticated level. Where the elders said, "It isn't true," my friend said, "It doesn't matter," thus justifying his continued support of and participation in the group. The it-doesn't-matter stance allows one to both satisfy the requirements of his intellectual discipline and meet most of the demands of his religious tradition.

A similar type of thinking may be involved in the interpretation by some of the *Book of Mormon* as "Scripture, because in it the word of God speaks to the human condition" (see Richard Lancaster letter, March 1971 *Courage*, p. 193), but not as history, much as the Book of Ruth in the Old Testament is seen by some as a benevolent and inspiring fable, but not a true account of what transpired between historical personages.

Mr. Elliott's question is blunt and does not lend itself to plainspoken answers. Is the question really such a subtle and intellectually complicated one—or are the complications of our own devising? In any case, it should be responded to in the interest of integrity and the reconciling of religious traditions with contemporary thought.

Bilaine Young

Financial Report on Venture Foundation

With this issue *Courage* completes its first year of publication. During the year we have published a pilot issue and four seasonal issues. It was our intention in the beginning that this journal be a means of open expression and dialogue within the church and that its pages be open to those who wanted responsible communication. The publication supported by Venture Foundation has been made possible by a great many who share our interest and concern and who have felt, with us, that the church was in need of this type of journal.

The response of the members of the church has been encouraging. In our first year of operation we have expanded to a paid subscription of 1,057 with some 75 who are yet to be billed. During this time we have received contributions from 55 different persons amounting to $3,583.40. The hours of labor and payment of incidental expenses covered by those associated with the Foundation has enabled us to spend nearly every dollar raised either on publication or promotion. A breakdown of the financial status of the Foundation follows.

It is obvious from this statement that the Foundation is not making money. We are, however, paying our own way. At the moment we are behind in the anticipated income needed in order to guarantee publication of the four seasonal issues of 1971-72. Additional contributions are necessary since publication costs cannot be met by the subscription price. We are reluctant to raise the cost of subscriptions because in our interest in making this dialogue possible we do not want the cost to be a preventive factor.

The board of Venture Foundation wishes to express its appreciation for the many helps received.

Financial Statement (As of May 31, 1971)

Income:	
Sales	$ 2,523.25
Subscriptions	6,281.00
Contributions	3,583.40
	$12,387.65
Expenses:	
Promotion and Mailings	$ 222.70
Postage	680.02
Advertising	336.09
Design	1,326.55
Supplies	204.70
Printing	9,587.33
Bad Debts	25.00
	$12,382.39
Income over Expense:	$5.26

Paul M. Edwards

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REVIEWS

Exploring the Faith. *Prepared by the Committee on Basic Beliefs, Clifford Cole, Chairman. (Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1970, 248 pp., $4.95.)*

A Protestant reviewer of a book by RLDS leaders for their people must avoid some traps. If he praises the book, he may give it the kiss of death. If he finds that it shows "progress," the faithful may well ask by what norm the progress is judged. If he finds confusion in it, he may only betray his lack of understanding of the inner genius of the movement which it expounds. Or it can be answered that the book was a committee job. Then if he prefers some parts to others, some subcommittee may feel slighted. This is to say that with awareness of the pitfalls, the reviewer now falls into them all.

There are two parts to the book. First is a "Statement of Belief" of nineteen numbered (but not named) paragraphs of affirmations drawn up by the Basic Beliefs Committee of the RLDS Church under the committee chairman, Clifford A. Cole. The Statement is offered not as a creed but as a guide for those faithful who are searching for truth and more particularly as a replacement for the older Epitome of Faith drawn up by Joseph Smith, Jr. This is the ostensible purpose, but is there another apologetic purpose? It occurs to me that the writers were concerned also to communicate with the "outside world" of Christian denominations, offering some conciliatory gestures in place of earlier truculence.

The Protestant reader of non-RLDS persuasion will indeed find little to disturb him in the Statement itself. Classic Trinitarian doctrine is affirmed. Man is estranged from God and is saved by grace through the atonement of Christ. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit men receive power to choose God; "thus they are turned from rebellion," etc.—that will lean further to Pelagianism than some would like. Baptism is by immersion—only a minority of Protestants would be that exclusive about it. And there is something about "laying on of hands," which would scarcely be included as an article of faith even by those who practice it. There are statements about the church sufficiently general to mean anything or nothing, and also about the kingdom of God—"present reality and future hope." Then some strange language intrudes, but hardly until paragraph twelve. There is a paragraph about "Zion," and a cryptic reference to "a central point of beginning," followed by vague specifications (a contradictory but appropriate phrase!) about specialized ministries, ordinances, sealing of covenant, inner meaning of revelation, "open" scriptures, the "principle" of resurrection, and judgment "exercised through men." An outsider might read through the entire Statement without having his theological antennas tickled; but if he is half awake, he will know in these last sections that something is afoot.

The second part of the book is a series of chapters expounding the meaning of the paragraphs of the Statement. In dealing with the whole book, it will help to consider the paragraphs with the expository chapters.

Some general observations are in order. First and foremost, there is not one word of the RLDS polemic of so many earlier books, a polemic directed against the Utah Mormons. That is of no small significance. It means that a new age has come for the movement, a new maturity achieved, with a release from old compulsions and a freedom to explore the gospel for its own sake. Second, and probably not unrelated, there is a complete absence of bitter attack on the "denominations"; indeed, there are expressions of indebtedness and kinship to them. The result again is freedom, a freedom to see that the God who works in the Bible and in the LDS history works also in the history of the "continuing Christian community," as the Catholic and Protestant institutions are described on page 130. While this "admission" may seem faint and even condescending to an outsider, anyone who has immersed himself in LDS literature will see that it represents a new spirit. Third, there is an attempt at both loyalty and comprehensiveness in terms of the RLDS tradition itself which aims at holding together both the traditionalists and the more restless ones. A pastoral spirit breathes in the book, a care for souls and not merely a defense of an authority.

Now it is time to get down to cases and issues, with respect to both the content of the doctrines and the scholarly technique of the writers. One is struck by the copious use of contemporary theological scholarship. There are citations of John Macquarrie, John Baillie (his early, liberal *Our Knowledge of God)*, John Whale, Karl Barth, J. A. T. Robinson (remember him?), Stephen Neill, Langdon Gilkey, John Hick, Reinhold Niebuhr, John Knox (of Union), Alexander Miller, Samuel Shoemaker, Emil Brunner, and others. These occur in the early part of the expositions: there are no such references, for instance, in the chapters on Zion and on priesthood. That is consistent with what has been noted previously, that the early paragraphs express a broadly orthodox position while the latter ones deal with in-group concerns for which outside help is either not sought or not appropriate.

The problem of resources is deeper than that. There is a certain datedness in the references, as if the committee had gone to seminary in the 1950's but had not had any work in church history. When one draws on a narrow chronological range of writers, one's temporal provincialism becomes especially pronounced. But what is the remedy? To use directly the biblical and historical resources which informed the theologians of midcentury rather than drawing upon these resources only through the filter of one generation of teachers. But it was a great generation (and some are still alive), so we may be grateful that they were consulted. And yet it must be asked, why not consulted in the later chapters as well as the earlier? Is there a more ultimate discontinuity with Christendom than the earlier paragraphs and chapters indicate?

The RLDS traditionalist will be watching this point, too. Does the book remain faithful to the "distinctives" (a favorite RLDS in-word)? The answer is yes, so far as an outsider can observe, although sometimes the language is muted. Alongside references to the Bible there are references to the *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine and Covenants*, and the Saints who have expounded these writings. Revelation is held to be open and continuing. Distinctive views of priesthood and ordinances are upheld, as is the doctrine of "Zion." King Benjamin is a real person, and those events from the *Book of Mormon* which are cited are taken as literal history. If any less traditional Saint had hoped to see a process of "demythologization" going on, at these points he will be disappointed.

Perhaps he need not be utterly dismayed, however. When it comes to the *theology* of the book as applied to the *practice* of the church, he can safely ignore these references; for they serve only to illustrate the positions taken and not to establish them, with very few exceptions. I do not mean to be unkind when I observe that the quotations from these sources consist largely of truisms, paraphrases of the Bible, or tautologies. For example, on page 191 there is a quotation from *Doctrine and Covenants* 1:3 c-e:

> The day cometh that they who will not hear the voice of the Lord . . . shall be cut off from among the people; for they have strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant; they seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way.

Now I find nothing objectionable in this, but neither do I need it. Like a lot of religious language that goes by in any religious group, snatches of Bible melded into a generally moralistic dictum, it really is not distinctive and can be ignored.

The defense of the RLDS doctrine of inspiration is marked by some flaws. The committee finds it necessary to set up a straw man (page 199) of revelation as propositional truth and then replace it with the dubious notion of the Bible as “a record of man’s experience with God” which nevertheless contains “a number of special revelations.” On pages 212-213 there seems to be the implicit argument that the Bible is diversified and errant, the *Book of Mormon* and *Doctrine and Covenants* diversified and errant, and therefore they both bear revelation. The premises may be true, but the form of the syllogism is faulty. The committee attempts, fortunately, to make Christ the norm of revelation. “Revelation centers in Jesus Christ, the incarnate word, who is the ultimate disclosure of truth and the standard by which all other claims to truth are measured.” But that norm is tied to the question of the canon, the writings which, as Luther put it, “cradle Christ.” I feel that the committee has vacillated between a concept of revelation as the deed of God in Christ in the context of the People of God and revelation of a more Gnostic style as the disclosure of religious truth, or “propositional revelation.” “The Scriptures are open,” reads Paragraph Sixteen. Why? “Because God’s redemptive work is eternal, and our discernment of it is never complete.” A *non sequitur*, for what has happened to the norm of Jesus Christ, and how is that norm established if we are to look for further writings to establish the norm? There is unfinished business in the matter of scripture, revelation, norm, and canon. At this point, Karl Barth could have helped.

Some minor points can be mentioned. The recurring use of “inner meaning” (page 237 *et passim*) bothers me. Is it Gnostic? Idealistic? What are its norms? Is it a truth which is only hidden or distorted in the “outer meaning”? Is it supernatural or suprahistorical? How is it determined? Or on page 231—“ ‘The character and personality of Jesus are the ultimate standards of humanity; and we must be judged by our approximation to these standards’ ” (quoting F. Henry Edwards). This sounds like the “historical Jesus” ethics of A. Harnack in 1900. What has happened to grace? What do we know about the “personality of Jesus”? In the same section, divine judgment is moralized to the point of being quite uninteresting. The apocalyptic flavor is lost: what is left is exhortation to be good. The same thing happens when the resurrection is denatured into a “principle.”

What has happened to the “distinctive” doctrine of Zion? The LDS movement has given this Old Testament figure a very special usage, to refer to a literal, sociological, political, religious entity to be located in Independence, Missouri. It is no longer a symbol or metaphor but a place on the map. The point is not labored in this book. What is labored is a matter of administrative import—the relation of headquarters to the outlying stakes of the church. The concept of Zion is radicalized (made into a metaphor?): “Zion is the implementation of those principles,” etc. There are to be many “signal communities” (an unclear idiom) which are served by the Center Place, but “Zion is not limited to one place or to one period of time.” One detects some change here.

The most marked change, observed earlier, is the irenic spirit with respect to other churches. It is acknowledged that the “Restoration” had its origins amidst a particular situation in Protestantism, to which it was indebted. The concepts of “restoration” and of “apostasy” are generalized, so that elements of both are seen in all of church history. God works at all times and places; “in this sense we have recognized God’s hand moving in the Reformation” (page 130), and “we must recognize our indebtedness to the continuing Christian community.” God works in all churches and, indeed, outside the churches. At the same time, "Protestant Christians" are distinguished from the "Church of Jesus Christ . . . restored" (page 106). Thus the writers seek to mute the old anti-Protestant polemic without giving up the Restoration doctrine.

The Saints should be grateful to their committee for a thoughtful, irenic, pastoral instrument of instruction in faith. Other Christians should be thankful that their RLDS brethren are laboring diligently and devoutly at the same problems which confront us all, problems of witnessing faithfully in this present age to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Carl Bangs is Professor of Historical Theology at Saint Paul School of Theology Methodist in Kansas City, Missouri; he is also a member of the Advisory Board of "Courage."

Christus. *By Dr. Wallace Shute. (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1970, 247 pp., $6.95.)*

Christus is a beautiful book. A verse drama magnificent in scope and grace, it extols the Christ:

> . . . God's lovely Son
> Offered Himself as prisoner to the flesh,
> That He might break the clogging chains of hell,
> So fully expiate, that winning free,
> Man might not die . . .
>
> Behold this day, this moment—yea, this Man,
> Fleshed but immortal—still most humanly
> In stable to be born, of no estate
> And no respect of men. Now watch and see
> How Christ, the Man, Mystery of God shall be:
> Observe Him well, share angel's ecstasy,
> For thou art His, and He thy destiny.

Christus is a beautiful harmony of scripture, imagined incidents, delightful poetic language, and dramatic force. Whenever direct passages from the Bible are appropriate, Dr. Shute uses them in such a way that they seem to be the natural words of the speaker. He inserts people well known to us from biblical accounts into imagined experiences with Christ: Saul of Tarsus is present when the widow's only son is healed at Nain. Having been sent by Caiaphas to "report on the workings of the Nazarene," Saul stands apart from the crowd kneeling at the feet of the Master and with surprise and horror says: "Fools! It is blasphemy! Blasphemy, I tell you! Such feats are done by witchcraft—powers of evil which mocking us would make this ill seem good! Are we all mad—seeing and hearing the impossible? Awake my soul, before I too surrender!" Such incidents are not only credible but also strengthen one's perception of Saul. The language is always poetic, whether the speeches are written in the form of a poem or as prose as in the speech of Saul's. It gives one the delight of carefully controlled sound and rhythm. The dramatic force of *Christus* comes in its structural use of Luke, "the poet physician," and Mark as narrators who weave the scenes together as they move toward the climax of the crucifixion and resurrection.

Interesting contrasts in character and theology emerge in such scenes as "The Preparation," where Elias, Moses, Isaiah, Zarathustra, and Socrates appear as prophets in heaven discussing the imminent appearance of Christ "fleshed but immortal." Elias says:

> But oh, the pain, my brothers, prescient pain—
> Searching, incessant, terrible in the mind
> Of Him whose holy Name we dare but breathe,
> Now that the Son goes earthward—now to be born . . .

Zarathustra adds:

> So soon to minister, hear our remembered pains—
> So terribly to die!

Isaiah concludes the scene with the

ecstatic proclamation:

Shout, planets all; ye galaxies, give
tongue!
For lo, God comes from distances
outflung,
Beyond dimensionates of time
and space
To grant such pity to one planet's
race
That aeons are astound, that
atoms cry
Shrilling hosannas as the Lord
draws nigh.

Paul Wellington states in his Foreword that Dr. Shute envisions the production of *Christus* to be a three-day festival of drama, music, and ballet. Production on any other scale would hardly do it justice. The play is divided into three parts. The strength of *Christus*, however, lies in its worth as a beautiful book to own, to give, and above all, to read. The layout of the book adds greatly to its internal beauty. Anyone would be happy to hold it in his hands. It also is a joyful reading experience, both for private reflection and for reading aloud.

Christus is an achievement that Dr. Shute, Herald House, and the entire church membership can well take joy in. One who reads it need not be reminded that the "play is humbly dedicated to the glory and worship of God and to the honour and service of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord."

Charlotte Gould is Associate Professor of English at Graceland College, Lamoni, Iowa.

The Soft Revolution. *By Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner. (New York: Delacorte Press, 1971, 183 pp., $4.95.)*

Not long ago, Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner told teachers how they could bring about educational reform in a book called *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*. In their latest book, *The Soft Revolution*, they've turned the students loose. The book is subtitled, "A Student Handbook for Turning Schools Around," but the way the authors explain it, it's more than a cookbook. That is, it is not a step-by-step plan, but rather a collection of helpful hints, models, maxims, ideas, case histories, etc., all of which suggest possibilities which one might incorporate into his own soft revolution.

By now you are probably asking, "Just what is a soft revolution, anyway?" Well, Postman and Weingartner explain it this way:

> The central purpose of the soft revolution is to help all of us get it all together in the interests of our mutual survival. It may try to reform an existing system or start a better one from scratch. It all depends on what one is prepared to do and what is possible. Its objective is to make changes in the way things are being done. Profound changes, where possible—and where that is not possible, simply improvements. It begins anywhere and anytime someone finds room enough to do something that is better than what's going on.

The soft revolution then is a piece-by-piece restructuring of the society's entire educational system. While the authors admit that it is possible to criticize this way of thinking as "piecemeal reform," they defend themselves rather vehemently by saying that no form of reform or revolution can divorce itself entirely from the past, or in other words, all revolution is ultimately piecemeal reform of one kind or another.

How is the soft revolution carried out? That is the question with which the authors spend nearly all of their time. The key concept of the strategy of the soft revolution is the metaphor of judo. That is, if students had more power than faculty or administrators, they wouldn't have to worry. The students could annihilate the opposition and set up their own structures. The fact of the situation, however, is that students have less power than faculty and administrators and must therefore use strategies in which the "adversary's" strength is used "against himself, and in spite of himself." (Translation: Be just as sneaky as you can.)

The book's suggestions are often very insightful with only occasional lapses into trivialities. The section explaining the role and uses of symbols in working for change and the section explaining the judo metaphor are especially good. *The Soft Revolution* is a fairly eclectic book. The authors have taken ideas tried by other people and "political" techniques which have been around for centuries (though not necessarily articulated) and placed them in a conceptual framework which can readily be adopted by individuals in their own specific situations. Now the only question is, How revolutionary is the soft revolution going to be?

A. Bruce Lindgren is a student at Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City.

Someone I Knew

God left town today
I called the cab
and waited next to him
hoping he would change his mind

but he wouldn't
and I couldn't
beg him to stay

when the cab came
I said goodbye
and turned away

old friends are hard to replace

Gary Barnett

LETTERS

On Revolution

To the Editors:

"A new world is always brought into being 'by destroying portions of the current one,'" states Joseph Pearson in his reply (March 1971) to an earlier editorial of mine, "Reality, Revolution and Revelation," (December, 1970). That statement and the general nature of Pearson's response raise a broad range of questions bearing on our obligation to create a new world.

Destroy, he says. Would Pearson not "replace, reorder or change"?

What would he destroy? Buildings? Social forms? The System? The people?

And then, how would he destroy them? With violence? His suggestion of violence as a Christian tactic prompts the following thoughts.

Pearson has criticized me for not more clearly defining revolutionaries or violence, for demonstrating a "myopic vision of things as they are," and for "putting down violence without more carefully considering its many facets." He reviews (quite ably) why Blacks and students (his interpretation of my "revolutionaries") today may well feel compelled to violence. And he suggests that progress and violence go hand in hand.

What concerns me most of all—and moves me to a counterresponse—is his defense of violence as a legitimate, even required, tactic for those who seek to bring in the new world. Any Christian worth the name is committed to a new world. Must he, therefore, also be committed to the use of violence?

I repeat here one of the points of my earlier editorial. Reliance on violence as a tactic of renewal is (1) unproductive in terms of winning people who are committed to a new social order; it is (2) out of historical and philosophical character for the Christian; and it is (3) an admission of the failure of all other methods of change. I repeat seven sentences from my earlier comments:

> Two qualities are needed in anyone who seeks to bring lasting changes in our world: participation and perseverance. Like it or not, our world is with us as it is. Only the juvenile will refuse to deal with reality and the harsh decisions it forces upon us. We must learn this brutal fact: men seldom, if ever, make decisions on the basis of what is right or even what is best. Rather, we make our decisions in the face of whatever alternatives are available to us. To refuse to do this because we don't like any of the alternatives is to reject life itself. Man's task is to create new alternatives.

Alternatives are never clearly drawn for us—that is the nature of life. We cannot choose between living in a world of violence or in a world of nonviolence. Pearson quite correctly points out that violence is an integral part of the human experience. It would be idealistic fantasy for us to maintain that we *could* act as if there were no violence—or to act as if there were no individuals who are quite willing to use violent means. Quite the contrary. The Christian must be ready to respond to violence. He must develop a philosophy of action—a strategy—that anticipates violence and prepares reactive postures to it. However, accepting violence as innate is one thing; adopting it as one's own strategy is quite another.

Pearson states that "every forward thrust in history has involved some corresponding violence." Perhaps. (I might ask for his definition of a "forward thrust.") Yet what was the driving, the creative, and finally the unifying factor of these thrusts? I suggest that analysis may well show that violence was *not* that factor.

In my opinion one of the most significant forward thrusts of our civilization is the increase of racial consciousness resulting from the Civil Rights Movement in the United States during the 1960's. There has been a great deal of violence connected with that movement. But the overwhelming majority of violent acts have been initiated by those opposing racial justice. The great strength of the movement has been its ability to respond to violence in a manner that increases its political power. The greater the violence directed at it, the more strength it has achieved.

Violence tends to have at least two reactions: (1) it begets more violence in return; and (2) it tends to turn public opinion against those who initiate it. Neither of these is helpful to the Christian cause.

Violence, by its very nature, is in every measure contrary to the functions of humanity. An act against the human life is *the* Ultimate act for that human and, therefore, for a portion of humanity. It can in no way be justified by the Christian doctrine. Even without a Christian base I would be hard put to justify violence as creative or beneficial to mankind.

One important surge of new life into the antiwar movement has come today from the Vietnam veterans who were forced into violence and who now see the total moral emptiness and strategic failure of the United States' policy of violence. They witness today of the ineffectiveness of violence in gaining the support of a people.

Ultimately, to bring the new world about, those who live in it must agree to its advent. There is no other way. It is the power of men's minds that must be engaged—not their hands that must be tied. That is why I stated that we can neither rely on Divinity to bring the new world nor can we resort to violence to force people into Zionic living.

The activist must have a case for a new world that is so well articulated and so powerful that a majority of the population will agree to it. No amount of violence can either bring or maintain the new world we seek.

One further note. Pearson infers that I am unlikely to be aware of what's happening today because of the limitations of my own environment. I am, he says, among those "limited by my white, middle-class background and my position within an establishment." I embrace a "media distorted concept of violence" and am one of those who "sit in our overstuffed establishment armchairs" and "fantasize why those with 'nothing left to lose' should respond in anger, despair or with violence."

This is absurd, and it begs the real issue.

I certainly do not claim to be a fountain of all knowledge, nor do I pretend to share from firsthand experience the frustrations of those living in our ghettos. However, even from the rose-colored, protected vantage one has in Lamoni (where I lived for five recent years), a reasonable man *must* hear the rumblings of discontent. And many must know the need for a modern revolution. Myopia is not mandatory. One need not rely entirely upon the *Des Moines Register* or NBC for news; one need not limit his contacts to Lamoni or Independence. We can get out of that overstuffed chair—if we wish. To refuse to do so is an apologetic surrender.

We dare not plead ignorance of the urgent need for social reform simply because of our limited background. Every man has his admitted limitations. Our task as revolutionaries is to break through those limitations and force man to see and feel the needs of his fellowman.

Pearson may feel that his establishment chair is too overstuffed. (I happen to know, however, that he is among the small company of RLDS who really *do* know what's happening.) But he cannot justly discount the position of those who disagree with him because of their "establishment" orientation. To do so is to give up, because the majority of those in Western society are in the establishment. I am a college administrator—an alumni fund raiser at that—and may be among the first to be discounted. I am convinced, however, of the need for revolution. And I can most certainly understand *why* many will respond in anger, despair, and with violence. Life for most Blacks here in St. Louis is true Hell. And college students throughout the nation are treated generally paternalistically and often ruthlessly.

I do not question the *need* for change and revolution. We must turn over the System. But I suggest that we cannot do it without popular support. We must convert the population—not kill them.

If Pearson rejects the establishment orientation of a college alumni administrator, what then of the bricklayer, the teamster, the businessman? Does he disqualify them? But they exist! And they must be included in the new world along with the Black and the student. They must be welded into a new force for justice.

Idealistic? Perhaps.

Impossible? Perhaps.

But worth trying? Unquestionably. Rejecting violence as a tactic does not mean accepting the System. It simply means operating within reality as we attempt to change the System and bring in the new world. Significant change—a lasting change in the System—is brought about by those who change men's minds. They are the revolutionaries in my book.

Roy Muir
St. Louis, Missouri

Author's Rejoinder

To the Editors:

Roy Muir's reply, again, begs the issue. My reply [March issue] asked several questions: "I would like some clarification. Just who are the short-sighted revolutionaries? What is included in the definition of violence? I look to the editorial itself for some answer but find none." I then proceeded to suggest two possible kinds of "revolutionary," raised some general questions and offered some comments about each one, and concluded by taking a look at violence and making some evaluations of the underlying causes of violence and its role in American history.

Muir's reply, however, takes issue with my notions about revolutionaries and my notions about violence, which is fine. These ideas are certainly open to criticism and refinement. But the original questions still stand. The author has not defined his understanding of "revolutionary" and has not even remotely defined what was meant by "violence." The original editorial was based on easy generalizations and the response to my reply, although it raises new questions, some rather sound ones at that, does nothing to nail down those generalizations.

Muir's reply further suggests, rather specifically, that I consider violence a "Christian tactic." I think this is a totally unfair interpretation. I suggest that Roy, and anyone else who has made this assumption, carefully reread my article in the March issue.

Joseph H. Pearson
Independence, Missouri

Centralized Power

To the Editors:

I received a copy of the March 1971 issue of *Courage* today.

I notice an article by Clare D. Vlahos, entitled "The Challenge of Centralized Power." In the first place there was no such thing existing in the church at that time. Under Joseph Smith III there was never any centralized power. Centralization of power did not occur till after he had passed away. It was those who succeeded him who fostered and effected centralization of power.

The controversy that went on in the *Herald* was between a member of the Presidency (W. W. Blair) and various members of the Twelve as to whose authority should be recognized as supreme in the church. Joseph Smith III was the editor but did not consider that the controversy should go on in the *Herald*. In fact, he told W. W. Blair that it must stop. He would not permit it to go on in the *Herald*. Brother Blair retorted that if he could not use the *Herald*, he would publish a paper of his own. Brother Joseph told him that he would not be able to do it. Brother Blair went to Michigan and in a few weeks was dead.

Daniel Muir in a recent article (December 1970) was mistaken in saying that Israel A. Smith wrote his father's memoirs. He did not write them. He and Frederick M. Smith edited them. I wrote them and my notebooks are on file in the church historian's office.

This is for your information.

W. R. Dexter
Independence, Missouri

* * *

The Book of Mormon

To the Editors:

I am very much enjoying *Courage*. I found the discussion on the *Book of Mormon* in the December issue to be especially stimulating. I must respond to Chris Hartshorn's letter, however, since I feel that some of his statements regarding the deutero-Isaiah theory were somewhat misleading.

First, Brother Hartshorn begins his discussion of the topic with the statement that "The deutero-Isaiah theory is put forth by theologians who generally discount the theory of divine revealment." Besides the fact that he did not attempt to document the statement, I am afraid that he places overly restrictive limits on the term "divine revealment." While it is obvious that one who gives credence to the deutero-Isaiah theory does not see the author of the book of Isaiah as "God's stenographer" there are numerous conceptions of "divine revealment" which are quite compatible with the deutero-Isaiah theory.

The most fantastic of Brother Hartshorn's statements is in his second footnote which reads in part: "Otto Eissfeldt quoted by Prof. Hugh W. Nibley with approval in his book *Since Cumorah*, p. 138-143, discounts the two Isaiah theory." Eissfeldt is undoubtedly the preeminent scholar in the field of Old Testament introduction, but neither Nibley nor Brother Hartshorn treat his position fairly. Eissfeldt says, ". . . the chapters Isaiah 40-66 cannot derive from the Isaiah who was active in the second half of the eighth century, but must be two centuries later in date" (*The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans. by Peter Ackroyd, Harper and Row, 1965, p. 332). It is unfortunate that Brother Hartshorn did not check the original source, for Nibley's use of Eissfeldt is very unfair. For example, Nibley quotes Eissfeldt in the following statement: "it will 'never be possible to achieve a completely satisfying and thoroughly convincing analysis' of the original book of Isaiah" (Nibley, p. 139). Even a superficial reading of this statement in context makes it clear that Eissfeldt uses it not in reference to the unity of the entire book of Isaiah but in reference to the more subtle question of the unity of Isaiah 1-35. Similar misinterpretations occur elsewhere in the book.

I personally feel that scholarship relating to the *Book of Mormon* needs to be broadened considerably in scope. While the church has spent its time trying to prove the historicity of the book, persons outside the movement have offered many of the most accurate analyses of what it is that the book is saying (e.g. Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons*, University of Chicago Press, 1957, Chapter 2). Attempts to deal with the question of the book's historicity are usually seen as attempts to attack or defend the book's status as scripture. The *Book of Mormon* will finally stand or fall on its usefulness in helping persons understand their relationship to God. Other criteria will prove to be ultimately of secondary importance.

I greatly appreciate Brother Ham's article, not because it "settles" any questions (it doesn't), but because it begins to set the discipline of *Book of Mormon* scholarship in a perspective which may ultimately prove to be more productive than the old "all or nothing" dichotomy.

A. Bruce Lindgren
Kansas City, Missouri

Comments on "Courage"

To the Editors:

I am greatly impressed by the attitude of constructive questioning that is evidenced by most of your authors. Some of your readers' letters have expressed the fear that those in the church would be weakened and confused by exposure to a fresh look at old traditions. But I want to testify that this approach can also be an attractive one. *Courage* has played a part in my conversion experience, and for this I thank you.

Russell R. Fletcher
Sao Paulo, Brazil

To the Editors:

I am very happy to see that *Courage* is emphasizing early Reorganization history and gives our scholars an opportunity to publish in Missouri. For years I have felt there needed to be a particular medium through which work could be done and published and circulated, not only to RLDS people but to anyone who is interested in the history of the movement. I feel that it has accomplished its purpose and it has pleased me very much. I am looking forward to other contributions in the history of the early Reorganization.

Dr. F. Mark McKiernan
Dept. of History
Idaho State University
Pocatello, Idaho

To the Editors:

I have enjoyed the first two issues of *Courage* and I feel it is aptly titled. You have had the courage to examine and label Joseph Smith as more than a prophet. You have printed articles casting doubts on the authenticity of the *Book of Mormon*. And you have graciously printed the opposition viewpoint. One wonders where your courage will take you next.

According to your letters column some readers question the value of this magazine. I would like to offer an experience in dialogue which I shared with others as an indication of what might grow out of this venture.

For two-and-a-half years I was a member of an open-forum discussion class in one of our larger congregations. The class was formed by six intellectually inclined, well-educated young men. They were dissatisfied with the ordinary adult Sunday school fare and wished to explore some issues which occupied their concern. They took turns leading the discussions, and eventually I was also invited to be a discussion leader. I served as coordinating leader for seven months.

We had every level of spiritual persuasion represented within the class. We had liberal-liberals, liberal-fundamentalists, fundamental-conservatives and every shade in between. Among the liberals were those who questioned the authenticity of the *Book of Mormon* and who tried to answer every question with intellectual reasoning. Among the conservatives were those who answered every question by declaring their spiritual faith in the unknown. As you can imagine, there were gaps.

But we were united by one goal. We all wanted to understand the Christian religion better so that we could apply it in our lives. Our discussions were controversial and disturbing, but they were also lively and stimulating. Our class grew and grew, and we had to seek larger quarters.

At the end of two years, the liberals were still liberal, the fundamentalists were still fundamental, and the conservatives were still conservative. Since minds are really changed through spiritual insight rather than intellectual argument, our discussions failed to change anyone's opinion. What, then, was accomplished by our class? I believe several good things came of it:

1. Lively, disturbing discussions caused us to go away thinking. Our thought processes were stimulated.

2. Conservatives who had existed in comfortable cocoons of apathetic belief were shaken loose when challenged by liberals. They reexamined and reaffirmed the spiritual base of their viewpoints and became more vocal in their defense. One lady said she had become much stronger as a result of being challenged.

3. Liberals were given a chance to freely air their points of dissent without fear of recrimination. Once aired, they were able to move on to more constructive areas of agreement with the conservatives.

4. The liberal-fundamentalist like myself had a chance to see if scriptural doctrines could be successfully coordinated with intellectual humanism. Personally, I did a lot of studying which I might not otherwise have done to prepare for my turns as discussion leader.

5. We found that honest differences of conviction could be expressed as long as we respected each other as fellow human beings striving for understanding. Mutual respect was the greatest key to the success of our class. We did not deal in personalities but in principles.

I offer this experience as an example of what *Courage* could do for those involved. Our class seems to me to have been a microcosm of the *Courage* experiment. If the readers of this magazine respect each other's honest attempts at scholarship and if all are truly seeking a greater understanding of Christ's gospel, then this venture can be a stimulating thing. We shouldn't be afraid of probing questions but should rise to their challenge.

Courage will fail, however, if:

1. Our intellectuals use it merely to show off their gifts of manipulating language rather than genuinely exploring truth.

2. Our dissention becomes centered in personality rather than conviction.

3. We spend the next two years attempting to prove or disprove the authenticity of the *Book of Mormon*. If a person reads the *Book of Mormon* seeking truth, his beliefs about its origin are of little concern. It will stand or fall ultimately on the truth contained in it and on whether that truth speaks to the saint of truth within the individual reading it.

The purpose of dialogue should be aimed at resolving differences and bridging gaps so that we can get on with it—"it" being the establishment of Zion.

Evelyn Herron
Mt. Laurel, New Jersey

Levi Lamoni Wight

To the Editors:

Courage is a never-failing source of surprises to me, and I was delighted to receive Vol. I, No. 1, since I have a small collection of magazine "firsts," including one of Gamel Abdel Nasser's *Arab* magazine.

Strangely enough, your March issue opened for me to Paul Edwards' review of *The Reminiscences and Civil War Letters of Levi Lamoni Wight*, edited by Davis Bitton (University of Utah Press). "Surely that can't be 'Uncle Lamoni'?" I thought. But it is. And now I am curious: How come these "reminiscences" are published by the University of Utah Press when Lamoni Wight was such a strong member of the Reorganized Church?

I became acquainted with "Uncle Lamoni" more than sixty years ago when he stayed in my parents' home in Independence during two or three General Conferences. That was in the early 1900's. We lived just across the street from the Stone Church when conferences were held there, and attendants sometimes failed to fill the upper auditorium.

Lamoni Wight's niece, Estella Wight, always had a room in our home at these times in which to do her reporting and editorial work. It was she who asked my mother if her aged uncle might occupy a downstairs room which we made available for conference visitors. From there, with the aid of his cane, he could walk to the sessions.

We four school girls could not have loved him more had he been a real uncle. He was the jolliest, friendliest old man, with a full beard which was snow-white like his hair. He always carried his Confederate uniform with him, and would sometimes dress up in it, hat and all, for our pleasure, and march around the room like the true Southerner he was. (Our mother's eyebrows raised a little at this, but she never said anything!)

I think it was then that I began sympathizing with the South, and General Robert E. Lee became to me a truly great American and gentleman. And the more I have read of him since, the greater has grown my esteem.

I remember "Uncle Lamoni" carried a special cane which meant a great deal to him. But I can't remember if he made it, or it was a gift.

J. W. Wight (father of Leslie) was a half-brother of Lamoni, son of a polygamous wife of Lyman Wight. He was a very large, broad-shouldered man, and as different from Lamoni Wight as day from night. During his mission to Utah, he stayed in my grandmother's home many times. He was a strong Democrat and my grandmother just as strong a Republican, and their discussions at times became almost acrimonious.

The father of D. W. and Estella Wight was also a son of Lyman, I believe; but whether he was a brother of J. W. or of Lamoni, or perchance the son of another of Lyman Wight's wives, I do not know. Estella called both J. W. and Lamoni "Uncle."

I am happy to be recieving *Courage*. The very first article I read was Wayne Ham's controversial writing on the *Book of Mormon*. I wrote an article commenting on that, but am rewriting it after reading various published criticisms.

I am eighty years old now. I attended *Book of Mormon* classes in the old Religio, with stalwart teachers such as Emma Kennedy and Cassie Haines. The very same questions Wayne Ham raises came up in our classes, but the teachers had somewhat different answers. I was glad to read the editorial asking for honest criticism and comment. I hope I can write something helpful, as well as constructive. To me, it seems the greatest crime of our time, worldwide, is the tearing down of faith in our churches, our government, our educational institutions, without offering anything tangible to replace it. When faith is lost, nothing solid remains on which to build a new world!

Flo Sterrett Whittemore
Soda Springs, Idaho

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